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Die wichtigste Frage, die nun schon seit Jahren die leitenden Männer der verschiedenen Länder beschäftigt, ist die, auf welche Weise man die durch den letzten Krieg erregten Völker wieder versöhnen könne, so daß nicht nur dem Buchstaben nach, sondern in Wirklichkeit Friede herrsche. Denn ob der Krieg auch formell beendet ist, so ist doch kein Friede da, die Völker sind nicht miteinander versöhnt. Neid und Habgucht, Haß und Rachedurst lassen die Welt nicht zur Ruhe kommen. Und solange die Menschen solch gehässige Gefühle gegeneinander haben, werden auch alle Mittel, die man versucht, nicht dazu führen, die Völker der Erde miteinander zu versöhnen. Bei vielen sind die schönen Reden von Versöhnung eben nichts als Worte; sie sind gar nicht darauf aus, wirkliche Versöhnung herbeizuführen, oder aber sie verstehen dies darunter, daß der Gegner sich ihren Wünschen unterwerfe. Das ist aber nicht Versöhnung. Wo der Geist der Versöhnung herrscht, da ist jeder bereit zu vergeben, wenn der andere ihm unrecht getan hat. Und weil der Geist nicht herrscht, besonders bei den leitenden Männern der verschiedenen Völker, darum kommt die Welt nicht zur Ruhe.

Und daß dieser versöhnende Geist fehlt, hat seinen Grund darin, daß jene Menschen nicht mit ihrem Gott versöhnt sind. Wenn das der Fall wäre, so käme die Versöhnung untereinander von selbst. Die Versöhnung der Welt mit Gott ist noch viel wichtiger als die Versöhnung der Menschen untereinander. Sind die Menschen untereinander nicht versöhnt, so machen sie sich das Leben in dieser Welt schwer; sind sie aber nicht mit Gott versöhnt, so gehen sie darüber des ewigen Lebens verlustig. Und die Versöhnung der Welt mit Gott ist vollbracht für die Menschen; es gibt da auf menschlicher Seite nichts zu vergeben, nichts

gutzumachen; Gott hat alles getan und will alles tun. Wenn die Menschen sich das nur zunutze machen wollten! Auch für uns, meine lieben Zuhörer, ist das wichtig. Betrachten wir auf Grund unsers Textes:

Die Versöhnung der Welt mit Gott.

1. Wie diese Versöhnung zustande gekommen ist;
2. wie sie der Welt bekanntgegeben wird;
3. wie der einzelne Sünder dieser Versöhnung teilhaftig wird.

1.

Wo Versöhnung nötig ist, da muß Feindschaft sein; mußte die Welt mit Gott versöhnt werden, so mußte zwischen der Welt und Gott Feindschaft bestehen. Und so war es. Es ist nicht richtig, was so oft behauptet wird, daß der Mensch von Natur gut und edel sei, so daß Gott gar keine Ursache habe, ihm zu zürnen. Die Bibel sagt uns etwas ganz anderes. Der Mensch, der zwar von Gott heilig und gerecht erschaffen war, ist gefallen, indem er Gottes Gebot übertrat. Dadurch ist der Mensch böse geworden, so daß er Gott nicht mehr gefallen konnte. Und in dem einen Menschen ist das ganze Menschengeschlecht verderbt. In Adam haben alle gesündigt, sagt die Schrift. „Durch einen Menschen ist die Sünde kommen in die Welt.“ Der Mensch ist nach dem Fall nicht mehr der Freund Gottes. Er ist das Gegenteil von dem, was er vor dem Fall war. Der Apostel sagt von den Heiden (und das gilt von allen natürlichen Menschen): „Welcher Verstand verfinstert ist, und sind entfremdet von dem Leben, das aus Gott ist, durch die Unwissenheit, so in ihnen ist, durch die Blindheit ihres Herzens.“ Und wiederum: „Der natürliche Mensch vernimmt nichts vom Geist Gottes; es ist ihm eine Torheit, und kann es nicht erkennen, denn es muß geistlich gerichtet sein.“ Des Menschen Wille ist verkehrt; er tut nicht, was Gott will. Was Gott nicht will, das tut er; er ist zu allem Bösen geneigt. „Das Dichten des menschlichen Herzens ist böse von Jugend auf.“ „Nicht daß wir tüchtig sind von uns selber, etwas zu denken als von uns selber.“ „Aus dem Herzen kommen arge Gedanken.“ Und die argen Gedanken werden in die Tat umgesetzt.

So sind seit dem Sündenfall alle Menschen beschaffen; alle sind wie die Unreinen, alle sind abgewichen und alle untüchtig; da ist keiner, der Gutes tue, auch nicht einer. Nun kann vor dem heiligen und gerechten Gott nichts Unreines bestehen; Gott haßt die Sünde. „Wer Sünde tut, der ist vom Teufel.“

So war Versöhnung nötig zwischen der Welt und Gott. Diese Versöhnung konnte der Mensch nicht zustande bringen; auch das allergrößte Opfer hätte die Schuld nicht tilgen können, die der Mensch bei Gott hatte. Gott konnte aber auch nicht so ohne weiteres über die Schuld der Menschen hinwegsehen; das wäre gegen seine Heiligkeit und Gerechtigkeit ge-

wesen, welche fordert, daß jedes Unrecht gestraft wird, und daß ohne Blutvergießen keine Vergebung geschieht. Aber Gott war bereit zur Versöhnung; und da die Menschen nichts taten und nichts tun konnten, den Frieden wiederherzustellen, so tat Gott es selbst.

B. 19: „Gott war in Christo und versöhnete die Welt mit ihm selber.“ Das, meine lieben Zuhörer, ist das größte Wunder, welches Liebe je verrichtet hat: Gott versöhnte die Welt mit sich selber. Gott war der Unschuldige, der nichts dazu beigetragen hatte, daß Feindschaft zwischen ihm und der Welt entstand. Die Menschen hatten sich von ihm abgewandt, waren seine Feinde geworden. Aber dennoch tat der gnädige Gott den ersten Schritt zur Versöhnung, ja, er tat alles zur Versöhnung, so daß für die sündige Welt nichts zu tun übrigblieb. Und wie hat Gott das getan? B. 21: „Er hat den, der von keiner Sünde wußte, für uns zur Sünde gemacht.“ Der von keiner Sünde wußte, das heißt, von keiner eigenen Sünde, der keine Sünde selbst getan hat, ist Christus, der eingeborne Gottessohn. Diesen Heiligen und Gerechten hat Gott zur Sünde gemacht, nicht zum Sünder, sondern zur Sünde. Unsere Sünde war das. „Fürwahr, Er trug unsere Krankheit und lud auf sich unsere Schmerzen. . . Die Strafe liegt auf ihm, auf daß wir Frieden hätten.“ Ja, die Strafe, die die sündige Welt verdient hatte, hat der Sündenträger auf sich genommen und gebüßt. Er hat aber auch das Gesetz erfüllt; denn „Gott sandte seinen Sohn, geboren von einem Weibe und unter das Gesetz getan, auf daß er die, so unter dem Gesetz waren, erlösete, daß wir die Kindenschaft empfangen“. Die Forderungen, die Gott im Gesetz an uns stellt, hat Christus vollkommen erfüllt. Dadurch nun, daß das Gesetz erfüllt und die Strafe getragen ist, ist die Welt mit Gott versöhnt.

Und diese Versöhnung hat Gott selbst zustande gebracht; Christi Werk war Gottes Werk; denn „Gott war in Christo“. Christus und der Vater sind eins; ja, Christus war und ist Gott. Was er getan hat, kommt der Welt zugute. Er wurde zur Sünde gemacht, „auf daß wir würden in ihm die Gerechtigkeit, die vor Gott gilt“. Vor Gott gilt nur eine ganz vollkommene Gerechtigkeit. Die konnte der Mensch auf keine Weise selbst erlangen. Christus aber hatte sie. Und seine Gerechtigkeit ist nun die Gerechtigkeit derer, für welche er zur Sünde gemacht worden ist; denn „Gott rechnete ihnen ihre Sünden nicht zu“. Ein gar trostreiches Wort, meine lieben Mitsünder: Gott rechnet ihnen ihre Sünden nicht zu. Alle Menschen sind Sünder, alle haben mit ihren Sünden Strafe und Verdammnis verdient. Aber hier steht es: „Gott rechnete ihnen ihre Sünden nicht zu.“ Ja, dann ist auch keine Ursache der Feindschaft mehr vorhanden; denn rechnet Gott die Sünde nicht zu, so sind die Menschen vor ihm gerecht, gerecht geworden durch das Verdienst des menschengewordenen Gottessohnes. Ja, in der That, Gott hat die Welt mit sich selbst versöhnt, indem er alles getan hat, die Feindschaft und die

Ursache der Feindschaft hinwegzunehmen, so daß nun den gefallenem Sündern der Himmel wieder offen steht. Ja, der Himmel steht ihnen offen, Gott will sie selig machen. Das erkennen wir, wenn wir zweitens betrachten, wie diese Versöhnung der Welt bekanntgegeben wird.

2.

B. 19: „Gott hat unter uns aufgerichtet das Wort von der Versöhnung“, sagt der Apostel. Das Wort von der Versöhnung ist das Evangelium, das uns sagt, daß Gott durch Christum mit der Welt versöhnt ist. Dies Wort hat Gott aufgerichtet, das heißt, befohlen, es zu predigen, besonders nachdem die Versöhnung eine vollendete Tatsache geworden war. Allerdings hat Gott schon vor der Zeit, nämlich im Alten Testament, durch die Propheten von dieser Versöhnung geredet, denn die Propheten haben immer wieder hingewiesen auf den, der da kommen sollte, sein Volk selig zu machen. In besonders reichem Maße aber wird das Wort von der Versöhnung gepredigt im Neuen Testament. Der Heiland selbst sandte seine Apostel aus, damit sie das Evangelium predigten aller Kreatur. „Wer euch höret, der höret mich“, sagt er. Das bringt der Apostel hier im Text zum Ausdruck: „So sind wir nun Botschafter an Christus' Statt, denn Gott vermahnet durch uns.“ Auch Paulus war ein solcher Botschafter Jesu Christi; er war auf besondere Weise von dem Herrn zu solchem Botschafteramt berufen worden; und er hat in diesem Amt treulich gearbeitet.

Das Wort von der Versöhnung soll aber verkündigt werden, solange es Sünder auf Erden gibt, das heißt, bis ans Ende der Welt. So werden Botschafter Jesu Christi bis ans Ende der Welt vorhanden sein. Diese Botschafter werden jetzt nicht von dem Herrn direkt berufen, sondern durch die christliche Gemeinde. Ein jeder Pastor, der ordentlichweise berufen ist und das Wort von der Versöhnung recht predigt, ist ein Botschafter an Christus' Statt; Gott vermahnt durch ihn, das heißt, er bittet und ermahnt die Sünder, die Botschaft anzunehmen.

Das, meine lieben Zuhörer, sollen wir allezeit beherzigen, daß die Prediger Botschafter Jesu Christi sind. Das Wort, das sie verkündigen, ist nicht ihr eigen, sondern es ist Gottes Wort. Gott selbst redet zu uns durch seine Diener und läßt uns mitteilen, was zum Heil unserer Seelen nötig ist. Diese Botschafter gehen auch jetzt nach des Herrn Willen hinaus in die Welt; immer weiter dringen sie vor, so daß sich das Wort Pauli erfüllt: „Es ist je in alle Lande ausgegangen ihr Schall und in alle Welt ihre Worte.“

Und dieses Wort von der Versöhnung ist allgemein. „Predigt das Evangelium aller Kreatur“, sagt der Herr. Jedem Menschen soll gesagt werden, daß Gott mit der Welt versöhnt ist; jeder soll eingeladen werden, sich dieser Tatsache zu trösten. Gott hat keine Einschränkungen gemacht; das Wort von der Versöhnung soll nicht nur den sogenannten besseren Menschen gepredigt werden, denen, welche äußerlich ein ehrbares

Leben führen, sondern allen ohne Ausnahme, auch den größten unter den Sündern. „Wer zu mir kommt, den werde ich nicht hinausstoßen.“

Gott knüpft auch keine Bedingung an diese Botschaft. Er sagt nicht: Ich will mit dir Frieden machen, wenn du erst ein besserer Mensch wirst, wenn du dies und jenes getan hast, wenn du deine Sünden gebüßt hast — nein, Gott läßt ganz einfach die Tatsache verkündigen: Ich bin mit der Welt versöhnt durch das Opfer meines Sohnes; aller deiner Sünden soll nicht mehr gedacht werden. „Kehre wieder, du abtrünnige Israel, spricht der Herr, so will ich mein Antlitz nicht gegen euch verstellen; denn ich bin barmherzig, spricht der Herr, und will nicht ewiglich zürnen. Allein erkenne deine Missethat, daß du wider den Herrn, deinen Gott, gesündigt hast.“

Auch euch, meine lieben Zuhörer, ist das Wort von der Versöhnung verkündigt worden, und es wird euch fort und fort verkündigt, und zwar rein und lauter, wie es sonst keine Kirche hat. Wer in unserer lutherischen Kirche das Wort von der Versöhnung hört, der kann sich nicht damit entschuldigen, daß er den Weg zur Seligkeit nicht habe sehen können, sondern wenn er verloren geht, so ist es seine eigene Schuld.

Doch wie wird nun der einzelne Sünder dieser Versöhnung teilhaftig? Diese Frage soll drittens beantwortet werden.

3.

B. 20: „So bitten wir nun an Christus' Statt: Lasset euch versöhnen mit Gott!“ Sind wir denn nicht schon versöhnt mit Gott? Steht nicht im Text: „Gott war in Christo und versöhnete die Welt mit ihm selber“? Und nun heißt es wieder: „Lasset euch versöhnen mit Gott!“ Es ist hier kein Widerspruch. Die Welt ist in der That mit Gott versöhnt; Christi Opfer hat genuggetan für die Sünden der ganzen Welt; Gottes Zorn ist gesühnt; seiner Gerechtigkeit ist Genüge geschehen; Gott rechnet der Welt ihre Sünden nicht zu — um seines Sohnes willen. Er streckt allen Sündern die Gnadenhand zur Versöhnung entgegen und spricht: Laßt uns Frieden haben! Und der arme Sünder soll nun die ihm dargebotene Friedenshand ergreifen. Das meint der Apostel, wenn er hier sagt: „Lasset euch versöhnen mit Gott!“ Laßt euch überreden, den Frieden anzunehmen, den Gott selbst zwischen sich und der Welt hergestellt hat!

Und wie geschieht das? „Christus ist des Gesetzes Ende; wer an den glaubet, der ist gerecht.“ „Nun wir denn sind gerecht worden durch den Glauben, haben wir Frieden mit Gott durch unsern Herrn Jesus Christum.“ Ja, mein lieber Mitsünder, glaube, daß Jesus Christus für alle deine Sünden genuggetan hat; glaube, daß du in ihm die Gerechtigkeit hast, die vor Gott gilt; glaube, daß du um Christi willen ein Kind Gottes und ein Erbe des ewigen Lebens bist. Wenn du das glaubst, so hast du es, so bist du für deine eigene Person versöhnt mit Gott, so wirst auch du den Frieden empfinden, der in dem Bewußtsein liegt: Ich bin versöhnt mit Gott.

Laß dich nicht irremachen durch den Satan und dein eigenes Gewissen, die dir die Größe deiner Sünden vorhalten. Bedenke, die Schrift sagt: „Wo aber die Sünde mächtig worden ist, da ist doch die Gnade viel mächtiger worden.“ „Wer zu mir kommt, den werde ich nicht hinausstoßen.“ „Wenn eure Sünde gleich blutrot ist, soll sie doch schneeweiß werden, und wenn sie gleich ist wie Rosinfarbe, soll sie doch wie Wolle werden.“ Ja, wirf alle solche Bedenken hinter dich und laß dich versöhnen mit Gott, indem du fest glaubst:

Ich bin bei Gott in Gnaden
Durch Christi Blut und Tod.
Was kann mir endlich schaden?
Was acht' ich alle Not?

Ist er auf meiner Seiten,
Gleichwie er wahrlich ist,
Laß immer mich bestreiten
Auch alle Höllelist.

Amen.

Schulpredigt zum Jahresfest der Einweihung einer Schule.

1 Tim. 4, 8.

Vor einem Jahre habt ihr eure schöne, geräumige Schule eingeweiht und seid heute hier im Gotteshause versammelt, um euch wieder des herrlichen Kleinods bewußt zu werden, das ihr an eurer Gemeindeschule habt. Ihr habt eure Schule nicht für euch selbst gebaut, sondern für eure Kinder. Und das habt ihr getan, weil Jesus sich während seines Erdenwandels der Kinder so liebevoll angenommen hat. Sagt er doch selbst: „Lasset die Kindlein zu mir kommen und wehret ihnen nicht; denn solcher ist das Reich Gottes!“ und: „Wer ein solches Kind aufnimmt in meinem Namen, der nimmt mich auf.“ Weil es nun euer Wunsch und Anliegen ist, Jesu rechte Jünger zu sein, darum habt ihr unter anderm auch eine Schule für eure Kinder errichten lassen. Ohne Zweifel habt ihr für eure Gemeindeschule große Opfer gebracht und bringt heute noch Opfer für dieselbe, Opfer an Zeit, an Geld und an Bequemlichkeiten. Von Natur aber sind wir Menschen opferscheu. Wir werden so leicht mißmutig, fortwährend Opfer zu bringen. Darum mag dem einen oder andern lieben, opferbringenden Gemeindegliede schon der Gedanke gekommen sein: Lohnt sich's, auch im Interesse unserer Gemeindeschule solch große Opfer zu bringen? Ist es wirklich der Mühe wert, eine lutherische Gemeindeschule zu erhalten? Allen denen, die schon so gedacht oder gar so gefragt haben, wird es heilsam sein, wenn sie wieder einmal erinnert werden an den segensreichen Einfluß der lutherischen Gemeindeschule. Laßt uns darum fragen:

Inwiefern übt die lutherische Gemeindeschule einen segensreichen Einfluß aus

1. auf das äußere und
2. auf das innere Wachstum der christlichen Ortsgemeinde?

1.

Die lutherische Gemeindeschule ist ein Hauptmittel zur Förderung der christlichen Ortsgemeinde. Damit soll jedoch nicht gesagt sein, daß eine guteingerichtete Sonntagsschule und ein gewissenhafter Konfirmandenunterricht nicht auch dem Auf- und Ausbau einer christlichen Ortsgemeinde dienen kann. Aber daß die Gemeindeschule ein viel besseres Mittel für das äußere Wachstum der Gemeinde ist, ist in unsern Kreisen längst bekannt und auch bewiesen worden. So hat vor kurzem ein Pastor einer lutherischen Großstadtgemeinde unsers Landes statistisch nachgewiesen, daß der Abfall der Konfirmierten, die nur die Sonntagsschule besucht hatten, viel größer war als der Abfall derer, die jahrelang die Schüler unserer Gemeindeschule gewesen sind.

Unsere Feinde verspotten uns, daß wir nicht anders Glieder zu gewinnen suchten als dadurch, daß wir unsern Kindern schon in ihrer frühesten Jugend die lutherische Lehre einprägten. Warum sollten wir das auch nicht? Schaden wir mit unserer Methode unsern Kindern? Hat nicht die Gottseligkeit die Verheißung schon dieses Lebens? Und wird in unsern Gemeindeschulen nicht Anleitung gegeben zu dieser Gottseligkeit? Gebietet nicht Gott in seinem Wort: „Weiset meine Kinder und das Werk meiner Hände zu mir!“? Sind nicht die Worte: „Lehret sie halten alles, was ich euch befohlen habe!“ Testamentsworte unsers Herrn und Heilandes? Wenn wir unsere lieben Kinder so früh als möglich unter den Einfluß des göttlichen Wortes bringen, zu Hause sowohl als auch in der Gemeindeschule, so tun wir nur unsere Christenpflicht. Nimmt sich nicht auch die Welt der Kinder und der Jugend an? Haben nicht die Freimaurer den De Molay-Orden für Knaben und heranwachsende Jünglinge gegründet? Wird nicht gerade in gegenwärtiger Zeit in unserm Lande ein Orden der Junior Knights of the Ku Klux Klan ins Leben gerufen? Das Ziel dieses Ordens ist, innerhalb eines Jahres einige Millionen Glieder, bestehend aus protestantischen Knaben im Alter von zwölf bis achtzehn Jahren, zu haben. Eine Abteilung für Mädchen soll auch bald gegründet werden. Und warum find die Logen so eifrig bemüht um die Knaben und Mädchen? Weil sie wissen, daß, wer die Jugend hat, dem auch die Zukunft gehört.

Wir betonen noch einmal, daß die lutherische Gemeindeschule ein Hauptmittel zum äußern Wachstum der christlichen Ortsgemeinde ist. Ja, wir gehen nicht fehl, wenn wir sagen, daß manche lutherische Gemeinde ihren Anfang einer Gemeindeschule zu verdanken hat. Vielleicht ist eure Gemeinde durch eine christliche Gemeindeschule entstanden. Die Geschichte eurer englischen Nachbargemeinde berichtet, daß sie vor sechsundzwanzig Jahren mit einer christlichen Gemeindeschule begonnen hat. Und ihr wißt, wie treu sie ihre Gemeindeschule heute noch pflegt. Heute noch beginnen viele Missionsgemeinden unserer Synode mit einer Gemeindeschule. Man sammelt zuerst die

Kinder in einer lutherischen Gemeindeschule und gewinnt so nach und nach durch die Kinder auch die Eltern. Wie oft hat sich's wiederholt, daß durch das Abhören der Hauptstücke des Katechismus oder Anhören der Biblischen Geschichte gleichgültige oder von der Kirche abgefallene Väter und Mütter wieder für das Reich Gottes gewonnen worden sind! — Bezahlt sich's also, eine lutherische Gemeindeschule in einer christlichen Ortsgemeinde zu haben? Wir sagen: Ja, voll und ganz! Und weil wahre lutherische Christen auch Missionare sind, so werdet ihr, liebe Glieder dieser christlichen Ortsgemeinde, auch nicht versäumen, sobald Gott euch eine offene Thür zeigt, eine andere Gemeindeschule einzurichten, fern von eurer jetzigen, die in Jahren wieder der Anfang einer andern christlichen Ortsgemeinde sein wird. So bringt die lutherische Gemeindeschule großen Segen für das äußere Wachstum der christlichen Ortsgemeinde.

2.

Aber nicht nur das äußere Wachstum der christlichen Ortsgemeinde wird durch die lutherische Gemeindeschule gesichert. Sie hat auch großen Einfluß auf das innere Wachstum der Gemeinde. Sie ist eins der besten Mittel, erkenntnisreiche Gemeindeglieder heranzubilden. Warum gibt es in den Sektentreifen unsers Landes so viele Leute, die heute Baptisten, nächstes Jahr Methodististen und im andern Jahr vielleicht Christian Scientists oder Holy Rollers sind? Weil sie von Kind auf die Heilige Schrift nicht recht gelernt haben. Unsere Missionare unter den Heiden in Indien und China bezeugen, daß die erste Generation der Heidenchristen, die als Erwachsene getauft worden sind, mehr in Gefahr stehen, vom Glauben wieder abzufallen, als die zweite Generation, die jahrelang die Missionschule besucht hat. Dies bestätigen auch unsere Taubstummen- und Negermissionare.

Unsere lutherischen Gemeindeschulen sind also Pflanzstätten erkenntnisreicher Christen, die die Gottseligkeit in diesem Leben üben. Darin haben wir auch den Grund zu suchen, warum unsere Synode so reich gesegnet wird mit frommen Knaben und Jünglingen, die sich zum Dienst am Wort für Kirche und Schule ausbilden lassen wollen. Über 700 solcher Knaben, die unsere Gemeindeschulen besucht haben, standen zu Anfang dieses Schuljahres vor den Thüren unserer Colleges und sprachen: „Hier bin ich, Herr, sende mich!“ Wo ist ein Kirchenkörper in unserm Lande, ja in der ganzen Welt, der mit einem solchen Gottessegne bedacht worden ist wie unsere Synode? Und wem haben wir diesen Segen zu verdanken? Nächst Gott unsern Gemeindeschulen, in welchen die Gottseligkeit gelehrt und geübt wird! Dazu kommen noch mancherlei andere Erwägungen. Wie töricht handeln doch solche lutherische Eltern, die ohne genügenden Grund sich weigern, ihre Kinder in die Gemeindeschule zu schicken! Sie geben damit ihren Kindern ein großes Ürgerniß, denn sie verachten eine Einrichtung, die besser als irgendeine andere das Wort Gottes in die Kinderherzen

bringen hilft. Wie können solche Eltern vor Jesu Christo, dem großen Kinderfreund wie auch dem Weltrichter, bestehen, wenn sie die ihnen von Gott anvertrauten Kinder nur für diese Zeit, nicht aber für die Ewigkeit ausbilden lassen?

Wie tröstlich aber ist es für Eltern, zu wissen, daß ihre in der Kindheit in die Ewigkeit abgerufenen Kinder eine lutherische Gemeindefschule besuchten! Denn die Gottseligkeit hat nicht nur die Verheißung dieses, sondern vor allen Dingen des zukünftigen Lebens.

Darum seid dankbar für das Kleinod eurer Gemeindefschule! Sie ist es wahrlich wert, daß ihr für sie kein Opfer scheut; denn sie ist ein großer Gottessegens für das äußere und innere Wachstum eurer Gemeinde.

F. A. Fischer.

Dispositionen über die neue epistolische Perikopenreihe der Synodalkonferenz.

Neujahrstag.

Kol. 2, 6—15.

Neujahr! Der bloße Name lenkt den Blick auf die Zukunft. Eine neue Reihe von Tagen, diesmal 366 an der Zahl, beginnt. Was sind die Gedanken, die heute die Menschen beseelen? Bei den Weltkindern findet sich bange Sorge. Einige wollen sich so darüber hinwegsetzen, daß sie sich in Lustbarkeiten stürzen und dadurch die Angst um die Zukunft vergessen. Andere versuchen sich einzureden, daß sie stark genug sind, um jedes Unglück, das möglicherweise herantreten wird, zu überwinden. Viele wiederum gestehen es, daß sie mit großer Besorgnis erfüllt sind beim Blick auf die Zukunft und nur hoffen, daß ein glücklicher Zufall sie vor dem Schlimmsten bewahren möge. Wie steht es beim Christen? Ganz anders! Ruhig und siegesgewiß sieht er das neue Jahr beginnen. Mein Thema heute morgen sei:

Die Siegesgewißheit, mit der der Christ ins neue Jahr tritt.

Zweierlei laßt mich ausführen:

1. Der Christ weiß, daß Christus alle seine Feinde überwunden hat, und ist darum gewiß, daß diese ihm auch in Zukunft nicht schaden können.

2. Der Christ weiß, daß Jesus neues Leben in ihm erweckt hat, und ist darum gewiß, daß der Herr dies neue Leben auch erhalten wird.

1.

a. Unser Text ist größtenteils ein Triumphgesang. Man höre noch einmal B. 10—15. Der Apostel hält den Christen vor, was Jesus für sie und in ihnen getan hat. Achten wir zunächst auf das, was für sie von Jesu vollbracht wurde.

b. Der Apostel nimmt seine Leser hinauf nach Golgatha, B. 14. In herrlicher Weise beschreibt er das Werk Jesu, dort geschehen. Die Handschrift, die gegen uns war, ist das Gesetz. Das wollte uns verdammen wegen unserer Sünden. Jesus hat es ausgelöscht oder ausgewischt (Grundtext). Dieser starke Ausdruck soll besagen, daß Jesus die Strafforderung des Gesetzes erfüllt und ihm damit seine verdammende Kraft genommen hat. Er hat gehandelt wie ein Freund, der einem Schuldner zu Hilfe kommt und sagt: Ich mache einen Strich durch deinen Schuldbrief; ich bezahle für dich. Ausgewischt ist die Strafforderung, nämlich mit Jesu Blut.

c. Einen noch stärkeren Ausdruck gebraucht der Apostel. An das Kreuz geheftet hat Jesus die Handschrift, den Schuldbrief. Er hat es gemacht wie ein liebevoller Freund, der etwa eine Rechnung, die uns geschickt ist, nimmt, verbrennt oder zerreißt und die Asche oder die Fetzen den vier Winden übergibt. Ans Kreuz geheftet: es deutet das hin auf Jesu Marter und bitteren Tod; es war das kein leichtes Anheften. Aber es ist vollbracht, und das Gesetz kann den Christen nicht mehr verdammen.

d. Dann nimmt der Apostel die Christen in die Welt der bösen Geister, B. 15. Weil das verdammende Gesetz aus dem Mittel geräumt ist, ist ihnen die Beute, auf die sie zuversichtlich gehofft hatten, entrisen. Als Jesus dann zur Hölle hinabfuhr, hat er ihnen seinen Sieg verkündigt und über sie triumphiert; vgl. 1 Petr. 3, 18. 19. Hier im Text wird uns der Triumphzug Jesu geschildert. Er fand öffentlich statt, die ganze Welt der Geister sah Jesum als Sieger. Freilich war dies unsichtbar für Menschengaugen.

e. Dies sind alles hochwichtige Erwägungen zu Anfang eines neuen Jahres. Am höchsten steht dem Christen sein geistliches Wohl; vgl. B. 8. Der Apostel sagt da nichts von Versorgung des Leibes. Gerade das, was dem Christen den Himmel rauben will, der Fluch des Gesetzes und die Wut der höllischen Mächte, kann ihm nichts anhaben. Und obwohl Satan jetzt noch umhergeht wie ein brüllender Löwe, so ist der Christ doch gewiß, daß der, der den bösen Feind überwunden hat, ihm nicht gestatten wird, einem Kinde Gottes Schaden zuzufügen.

f. Hält Jesus die Feinde fern im Geistlichen, so gewiß auch im Leiblichen. Da er das Große getan hat und tut, wird er auch das Geringere tun. Es hat daher der Christ nicht Krankheit, Hunger, Feuersbrunst, Raub und dgl. zu fürchten. Kommt es doch, so ist es nicht ein Übel, sondern eine heilsame, nötige väterliche Züchtigung.

2.

a. Ferner hat Jesus Großes in dem Christen ausgerichtet. Der Apostel sagt, B. 11: „In welchem ihr auch beschnitten seid.“ Es ist dies auch deshalb ein passender Text für den Neujahrstag, weil, während das altkirchliche Evangelium für diesen Tag von der Beschneidung

Christi erzählt, dieser Abschnitt von der Beschneidung der Christen sagt. Gemeint ist, wie es gleich weiter heißt, die Ablegung des sündlichen Fleisches. Die Sünde, die uns ganz regierte, wurde vom Thron gestoßen. Das war allerdings unserer Natur zuwider, ein schmerzensvoller Akt, erinnernd an die leibliche Beschneidung.

b. Mit Jesu sind wir begraben worden. Das ist dieselbe Sache wie die eben erwähnte. Der alte Adam wurde begraben; ihm wurde seine Gewalt genommen.

c. Mit Jesu wurden wir lebendig gemacht. Es ist derselbe Vorgang wie die schon genannten. In uns geistlich Toten wurde geistliches Leben erweckt. Und zwar geschah das alles „mit Christo“. Christus wurde begraben und wieder erweckt. Wir stehen in solcher Beziehung zu ihm, daß, was an ihm geschehen ist, auch an uns hinausgegangen ist, wenn auch in anderer Weise.

d. Es ist das alles verrichtet worden durch die Taufe. Was die Beschneidung im Alten Testament war, ist die Taufe im Neuen. Wie jene an Kindern vollzogen wurde, so auch diese. Wie man durch jene in Israel aufgenommen wurde, so wird man durch diese ein Glied des geistlichen Volkes Gottes, der christlichen Kirche. Die Taufe wirkt neues, geistliches Leben (Wiedergeburt). Wie? Sie setzt den Glauben ins Herz hinein. Daß nämlich die Erweckung des neuen Lebens im Gläubigwerden besteht, ist aus B. 12 zu sehen. Alle Sünden sind damals vergeben worden, als wir getauft wurden und zum Glauben kamen, B. 13. Welch seliger Augenblick! Und waren wir abgefallen und hat Gottes Gnade den Glauben wieder in uns gewirkt, so sind uns auch alle diese Segnungen aufs neue widerfahren.

e. Hat Jesus so Großes in uns getan, uns den Glauben und damit geistliches Leben geschenkt, so wird er dies Leben auch in uns erhalten. Das eine verbürgt das andere. Er hat uns gewiß nicht deshalb zum Glauben gebracht, um diesen verkümmern zu lassen. Die Schrift sagt uns das auch deutlich, z. B. Phil. 1, 6. Und daß er uns erhalten kann, ist gewiß, B. 9.

f. Wird er das geistliche Leben in uns erhalten, dann auch das leibliche. Er wird uns darreichen, was wir nötig haben zur Lebensnahrung und =notdurft. Lassen wir es nur immer unser Bestreben sein, fest mit unserm Heilande verbunden zu bleiben, wie B. 7 geschildert wird. Dann können wir heute fröhlich und siegesgewiß der Zukunft entgegenschauen, und jeder Tag des neuen Jahres wird uns dem ersehnten Ziel näher bringen, dem ewigen Vaterhaus. A.

Epiphania.

Ap o st. 8, 26—39.

„Mache dich auf, werde Licht!“ Jes. 60, 1. Mit diesem Herolds- und Prophetenruf leitete einst Jesaias seine prächtige Schilderung der Kirche Gottes ein. Sich aufmachen, was heißt das? Licht werden?

Es ist Gottes Wille und Voratz, daß von Zion aus das Licht der Welt gesendet werde. Vgl. auch Luk. 1, 79. Allen Christen sagt der erschienene Heiland: „Ihr seid das Licht der Welt.“ Er fügt die Mahnung hinzu: „Lasset euer Licht leuchten!“ Wenn doch dieser Geist die Christenheit erfüllte, dann gäbe es keine Not in der Mission. Und gerade wir, die Nachkommen derer, die da liefen zu den stummen Götzen, haben alle Ursache, den Missionsruf des Heilandes zu befolgen. Wir — das glauben wir doch — sind „ein Licht in dem Herrn“. Zum rechten Eifer kann uns auch der Text ermuntern.

Das Missionswerk und seine Frucht.

1. Das Werk selber; 2. seine Frucht.

1.

a. Es ist uns klar von Gott geboten, W. 26. a. Bestimmter und deutlicher Befehl Gottes an Philippus, ähnlich dem Worte Gottes, das die ersten Heidenmissionare in die Arbeit stellte, Apost. 13, 2. In W. 29 wird der Befehl auf den Einzelfall angewandt. b. So haben auch wir Gottes bestimmten Auftrag. Es bedarf nicht erst noch eines Sonderbefehls. Alle Ermunterungen der Schrift sind Beweise für die Aufgabe der Kirche. Nur menschliche Blindheit kann so reden: Das Missionswerk ist nutzlos; eine Religion ist so gut wie die andere. Alle Wege führen nach Rom usw.

b. Wird oft in wunderbarer Weise eingeleitet. a. Der Befehl des Herrn war merkwürdig. Philippus stand in gesegneter Arbeit. Nun sollte er in eine „wüste“ Gegend gehen, W. 26. Dann sollte er einen großen Herrn in seiner Arbeit stören, W. 29. Welche Absicht hatte wohl Gott dabei? Fleisch und Blut wußte da keine Antwort. b. Gottes Wege sind immer wunderbar, wir stehen so oft vor Rätseln. Besonders wunderbar sind seine Wege in der Arbeit in seinem Reiche. Auf steinigem Boden sproßt die Saat trotz aller Feindschaft zu seiner Zeit. Über und wider Erwarten weiß er zu segnen, Mark. 4, 26—29. Oft hängt an einer Seele die Seligkeit vieler. Selbst die wunderlichsten Ereignisse im Leben des einzelnen dienen Gottes Zweck.

c. Durch die von Gott gegebenen Mittel soll die Arbeit geschehen und wird sie ausgerichtet, W. 30—35. a. Der Kämmerer kannte den Gott Israels, aber der Heiland war ihm unbekannt. Aller Glanz und aller Schein der Gottesdienste in Jerusalem stillte nicht seine Sehnsucht. Seine Sünde quälte ihn. Auch das Buch, das er las, war ihm verschlossen. Philippus legt ihm die Schrift aus. Was war der Inhalt? W. 32f. Durch den Hinweis auf das rätselhafte und doch für Sünder so tröstliche Leiden des Erlösers predigt er ihm das Evangelium. Vgl. hierzu D. Stöckhardts Auslegung der Stelle. (Stöckhardt, Passionspr. II, S. 14 ff.) b. Dies allein ist auch unser Mittel. Gottes Wort ist ein ewiges Wort. Es gilt für

alle Völker, alle Zeiten. Veränderte Umstände, andere Zeiten usw. machen keinen Unterschied. Der Heide des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts ist derselbe Heide wie zu der Apostel Zeit. Der Ungläubige unserer Tage wird nicht durch Vernunftgründe bezwungen. Der Grieche unserer Tage muß auch zum Kreuz Christi kommen. Der Mißerfolg (scheinbarer) liegt an uns, nie an Gottes Wort. Aber nur keine falschen Mittel gebrauchen, um dem Wort Gottes zu helfen!

2.

a. Ein fester Glaube an den Sohn Gottes. a. Der Rämmerer wird bekehrt durch das Wort des Philippus. Er schämt sich auch nicht, diesen Glauben zu bekennen, B. 36. Bei dieser Stelle ist auf das Verhältnis zwischen Juden und Heiden zu achten. Der vornehme Mann begehrt die Taufe. Das war ein Bekenntnis. Er war jedenfalls nicht allein, und seine Tat blieb nicht verborgen. Das alles hindert ihn nicht. b. Ja, Gottes Wort kommt nicht leer zurück. Aus Heiden macht es Christen, aus Sündern Gottes Kinder. Menschen, die unter dem Jorn Gottes liegen, werden dadurch selig. Sollte diese Frucht uns nicht antreiben? Ähnliche Erfahrungen gibt es viele in der Missionsarbeit. (Unsere Innere Mission, Brasilien, Negermission, Indien, China.)

b. Ein fröhlicher Wandel durch die Welt des Elends, B. 39b. a. „Er zog seine Straße fröhlich.“ Was besagt das nicht alles! Alle Ehre, aller Reichtum, alles Ansehen hatte sein Herz leer und freudlos gelassen. Nun zog er seine Straße fröhlich. Die Straße führte zurück an den Hof einer orientalischen Fürstin mit all seiner Pracht und all seinem Glanz, zurück zu Leuten, die seinem Heilande noch fernstanden. Er zog die Straße als Kind Gottes, die Sonne des Evangeliums beschien seinen Weg. b. Menschen fröhlich zu machen, sie in Gott zur Freude zu bringen — diese köstliche Frucht soll auch unserm Werk werden. Wie nötig hat die Welt, nicht nur die Heiden, sondern alle Welt, diese Freude! Gerade jetzt, da wir so viele verunglückte Versuche vor Augen haben, ist dies besonders wichtig. Nur eins kann wirklich Frucht und Freude wirken auf der Welt — das Evangelium, das einst Jesaias predigte und das unsere Missionare überall verbreiten.

A. Sch I.

Zweiter Sonntag nach Epiphania.

Ep h. 5, 22—33.

Die Ehe ist eine heilige Ordnung Gottes, noch im Stande der Unschuld gestiftet. Der Teufel und die Sünde haben aber diese Ordnung Gottes greulich verderbt, wie es am Tage ist. Die Zeitungen sind voll von Berichten über Bruch, Verletzung und Entheiligung der Ehe. Ungeachtet agitiert man für „freie Liebe“, „Probeehen“, „Geburtskontrolle“. Ach, wie hat der Teufel den Ehestand so greulich geschändet!

So klagt schon Vater Luther. — Kinder Gottes dürfen das wüste Leben und Treiben der Weltmenschen nicht mitmachen. Sie richten sich in allen Dingen nach der Ordnung und dem Vorbild ihres Vaters im Himmel, Matth. 5, 45, auch im Ehestande. Zu dem Zweck halten wir unsern Herzen immer wieder die Ordnung und das Vorbild unsers Gottes vor. In unserm Text wird uns das innige Verhältnis zwischen Christus, dem Bräutigam, und seiner Kirche, der Braut, gar lieblich vor Augen gemalt als:

Das wundervolle Vorbild für christliche Eheleute.

1. Wie die Kirche Christo, so sind christliche Ehefrauen ihren Männern unterthan.
2. Wie Christus die Kirche, so lieben christliche Ehemänner ihre Weiber.

1.

a. B. 22. 28. Die Pflicht der Ehefrauen. Hier redet Gott der Herr; das ist seine Ordnung von Anfang an. Gott sagt gleich nach dem Sündenfall: „Er soll dein Herr sein.“ Der Mann soll im Hause das Haupt, der Regierende, Leitende, der Ausschlaggebende sein. Die Weiber sollen sich den Anordnungen der Männer fügen, und zwar „als dem Herrn“. Der Mann wird hier als Stellvertreter Gottes für sein Weib bezeichnet. Wie eine christliche Frau, wenn Gott direkt zu ihr reden würde, gern unterthan und gehorsam sein würde und mit Maria sprechen: „Siehe, ich bin des Herrn Magd“, so soll sie ihrem Mann als Stellvertreter Gottes unterthan sein. Dient eine Frau so ihrem Mann, als „Gehilfin“ (nicht Herrin), so ist das zugleich ein Gottesdienst. — Ist das nicht lockend und reizend, christliche Ehefrauen? Doch ist dieses Gebot Gottes vielen Weibern unserer Tage eine harte Rede, ein Greuel, wogegen sie wüthen und toben; ja, sie fordern, daß diese Worte aus Bibel und Trauformel gestrichen werden als ein überbleibsel aus der finstern Sklavenzeit der Frauen. Sie wollen dem Mann gleichgestellt, ja, über ihn gesetzt sein. Er soll nicht ihr Herr, sondern ihr Diener, ihr „Narr“ sein. Viele Männer, besonders in unserm Land, lassen sich zu Sklaven ihres Weibes erniedrigen. Gottes Ordnung wird aufgehoben, und ungöttliches Familienleben ist an der Tagesordnung.

b. B. 23. 24. Das liebliche Vorbild. Ehefrauen haben für ihren Gehorsam das hohe Vorbild der Kirche Christi. Christus ist der Herr, das Haupt der Kirche. Das Haupt regiert den Leib in allen Gliedern. So regiert Christus durch sein Wort die Gemeinde der Heiligen. Diese ist seine Braut, welche er sich teuer erkauft hat: sie ist sein Leib. Die Kirche hat ihren lieben Herrn, ihr Haupt und ihren Bräutigam, von Herzen lieb, weil er eben der Geliebte ihres Herzens ist, dem sie sich aus und in Liebe angelobt hat. Sie weiß, daß sie von ihm teuer und wert gehalten wird, hat er sich doch für sie geopfert; er

schenkt ihr mit sich alles. Deshalb ist sie ihm gern und willig untertan als liebende Braut. Sein Wort ist ihr lieb und wert, und durch ihren Gehorsam beweist sie ihm ihre große Liebe. „In allen Dingen.“ Nicht nach Gutdünken. Ihr gefällt alles, was Christus anordnet, denn sie weiß, das ist zu ihrem Heil. — Wie die Kirche, zu welcher ja ein christliches Weib auch gehört, Christo untertan ist in allen Dingen, willig, gern, aus Liebe, so soll das Weib ihrem Manne untertan sein als ihrem Haupt und Herrn. Auch einem ungläubigen Mann soll sie, um des Herrn willen, in allen leiblichen Dingen gehorchen. Damit ist nicht gesagt, daß die Männer ihre Frauen tyrannisieren und slavischen Gehorsam fordern sollen; das tut der Herr auch nicht mit seiner Kirche. Wenn nun ein Mann, wie das Haupt den Leib, sein Haus regiert, sollte dann das Weib dem Mann ihrer Liebe und freien Wahl nicht gern sich unterordnen? Ist das so schwer? Sie weiß ja, sie folgt darin dem Vorbild der Kirche und einer heilsamen Ordnung Gottes. — Daß doch alle Frauen diesem Vorbild folgen möchten! Wieviel Zank, Streit, Haß, Wehe und Herzeleid würde ihnen selbst und den Familien erspart bleiben! Wenn sie herrische, zänkische Widerreden unterlassen, zu rechter Zeit schweigen und gehorchen, an ihr Ehegelübde denken, eine rechte Gehilfin sein würden, wieviel Wehe der Ehe würde wegfallen! So wenig erniedrigend es für eine Frau ist, ihrem Gott und Heiland untertan zu sein, ebenso wenig erniedrigend ist es, dem Mann, den sie ehrt und liebt, untertan zu sein. O christliche Ehefrauen, laßt euch vom Teufel nicht blenden und betören! „Neue“, „moderne“ Frauen schaffen nur Unheil in der Ehe. O ihr Ehefrauen, lernt diese Lektion, so wird es wohl im Hause stohn!

2.

a. B. 25 a. Die Pflicht der Ehemänner. Knapp und klar lautet das Gebot Gottes. Hat nicht die Liebe den Mann bewogen, gerade dies sein Weib zum Gemahl zu nehmen? Ist die Ehe nicht ein Liebesbund? Hat der Mann dies nicht am Traualtar feierlich gelobt? Diese Liebe zu dem Weib seines Herzens soll das ganze Eheleben durchdringen. Diese Liebe wird den Mann vor tyrannischem, gewalttätigem, unsinnigem Wesen bewahren. Er wird ihr Gutes tun, ihr Liebe beweisen, sich richten nach dem Hohenlied der Liebe, 1 Kor. 13, 4—7. So wird er es seinem Weib leicht machen, untertan zu sein. Wir Männer haben hohe Ursache, diese Lektion unsers Gottes zu lernen, da wir uns durch Lieblosigkeit so oft an unsern Weibern versündigt.

b. B. 25 b—28 a. Das hohe Vorbild für Männer. Christus hat die Gemeinde geliebt von Ewigkeit, als er sie sah häßlich, in unflätigen Kleidern, als sie gar keine Schöne hatte, nichts, was ihm gefallen konnte. Doch er liebte die Häßliche und bewies seine Liebe, indem er für sie den schrecklichsten Tod starb, mit seinem Blut sie heiligte, mit den Kleidern des Heils sie bekleidete. Als dann die ein-

zelnen Glieder in die Welt eintraten, scheute und ekelte er sich nicht, sie auf seine Arme zu nehmen und im Wasserbad der Taufe sie zu reinigen. Er gab ihnen seinen Heiligen Geist, welcher sie zu neuen Menschen machte und in ihnen wirkt, daß sie im neuen Sinn die Sünde hassen und ihrem Bräutigam zu Gefallen leben. So stellt er sich ihm selbst eine Gemeinde dar, herrlich, heilig, unsträflich, bis sie im ewigen Leben in der ganzen Reinheit und Schöne vor ihm steht. — Er hat Geduld mit ihren Fehlern und Gebrechen; beschenkt sie alle Tage reichlich mit seinen Gaben, hegt, pflegt und trägt sie in aller Langmut. Welch ein Geheimnis, das innige Liebesverhältnis zwischen Christus und seiner Gemeinde! B. 32. — So sollen wir Männer unsere Weiber lieben und eifrig streben, diesem Liebesvorbild ähnlich zu werden. Wir sollen unsern Weibern diese Liebe zu ihnen mit Wort und Tat beweisen, bereit sein, uns für sie aufzuopfern, mit ihnen Geduld haben in ihren Schwachheiten, ja auch Sünden; sie als die schwächeren Werkzeuge tragen, stärken, führen, ihnen rechte Wegweiser und Leiter sein auf dem Weg der Heiligung; teilnehmen an ihren Sorgen, Arbeiten, Schmerzen; uns interessieren für ihr Leben im Haus; ihnen Anerkennung zollen für ihre selbstlose Aufopferung im Dienst der Familie, als so treuen Gehilfinnen. — Ist das nicht herrlich, schön und heilsam, was Gott uns Ehemännern sagt, gebietet und vorbildet? Folgen wir dem, dann werden viele finstere Schatten aus unsern Häusern fliehen, und wir werden glücklich sein.

c. B. 28 b—33. Mann und Weib ein Fleisch. Diese innige Gemeinschaft ist durch den Ehebund geschaffen worden. Ein Fleisch! Wir haben alles gemeinsam, Freude und Leid. Wie wir nun unsern Leib lieben, nähren, pflegen, vor Schaden bewahren, so sollen wir unsern Weibern daselbe erweisen. Wir sind ein Fleisch! Wer sein Weib liebt, der liebt sich selbst; denn sie ist ein Teil seiner selbst. Haben wir Vater und Mutter verlassen, um an unserm Weib zu hängen, eins mit ihr zu sein, ei, so erweisen wir uns selbst Gutes, wenn wir es ihr tun; lieben uns selbst in unserm Weib. — Darin ist wiederum Christus unser Vorbild. Er nährt und pflegt seine Gemeinde unermüdlich, da die Kirche sein Leib ist, seine Glieder, und diese in innigster Gemeinschaft mit ihm stehen. Vergessen wir Männer nicht: wer sein Weib liebt, liebt sich selbst! — Dieser herrliche Text zeigt uns das wahre Ideal christlichen Ehelebens. Höheres kann nicht erdacht werden. So allein kann wahres Eheglück zustande kommen. Das wird jeder, welcher es recht bedenkt, zugeben. Lassen wir der Welt ihr Herrbild ohne Reid. Halten wir uns an das hohe, köstliche Vorbild, welches Gott uns gestellt hat: Ihr Weiber, seid in Ehrfurcht euren Männern untertan, und ihr Männer, liebt eure Weiber, wie Christus die Gemeinde und ihr eure eigenen Leiber liebt! Dann wird es wohl im Hause stohn, und wir werden mit Paul Gerhardt singen: Lied 482, 1.

R. Piehler.

Outlines on the First Series of Gospel-Lessons Chosen by the Synodical Conference.

New Year's Day.

LUKE 13, 1—9.

The very custom of wishing one another a happy New Year indicates that to-day men are looking *forward*. As for the ungodly, they know no "sweeter" comfort than this, "to take things as they come." If things look very dreary, they have one secret "hope" — they may end their own life here upon earth by suicide. (Not a very bright outlook for New Year's Day!)

But how about us? What do we Christians know about this coming year? Thank God, we are sure of this, that there is One wiser, richer, and far, far more powerful than we, who "has all things in His keeping," and without whose will "not a sparrow shall fall on the ground," and that he has numbered "the very hairs of our head." Matt. 10, 29. 30.

Moreover, all that we ought to know of the future God has revealed to us in His infallible Word. Here in our text He answers for us

TWO QUESTIONS CONCERNING THIS NEW YEAR 1924.

1. *Who to-day is facing bitter sorrow?*
2. *Who may confidently expect a happy New Year?*

1.

a. Text. Some informed Jesus of a number of Galileans "whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." Jesus knew of this incident and added the story of another catastrophe, of the "eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell." The manner in which these things are spoken of ("likewise," v. 3) leads us to conclude that these disasters were God's judgment upon wicked persons who had lived and died in sin.

b. There are some disasters which are such evident judgments upon transgressors that even the ungodly may recognize an act of God. Hence the colloquial expression: "He got what was coming to him." The malefactor: "We receive the due reward of our deeds." Luke 23, 41. Almost daily the press reports such cases.

c. But Jesus warns His hearers (most of whom seemed very respectable people) not to imagine that such people as live in vile, gross sins and then perish amid sensational circumstances are the only ones whom God will strike down. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." The curse of God and eternal doom await *all* impenitent persons.

Here is the answer to our first question. All impenitent persons are to-day, on this first day of 1924, facing darkness, bitterness, and eternal ruin and damnation. If they remain impenitent, I care not how many thousands of friends are wishing them a happy New Year, bitter unhappiness is not far off. Remember Lot's wife, Jerusalem, Judas.

Note well that Jesus does not divide people into good people and bad people. Without distinction Jesus demands repentance of all. "There is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." It is true, there are different sins, public sin and shame and secret sins. But all are sinners, and all impenitent sinners are facing the doom of sorrow, tears, bitterness, death, and damnation.

I care not how much or what power you have; if you remain impenitent, the more you have, the more you will lose; the higher you are standing, the deeper you will fall. I cannot tell where or how God's wrath will strike,—children, business, health, life, honor,—but if you continue in your sin, you are facing misery, misfortune, and sorrow. Text, vv. 6—9. "Search me, O God," etc. Ps. 139, 23. 24. There may be many uncertainties to-day, but this is not among them.—"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezek. 33, 11. But if he will not turn from his way, he will certainly perish. "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. 3, 9. But if they do not come to repentance, they will certainly perish. Therefore: Hymn 48, 3. 4. 6.

2.

a. This text also answers our second question: For whom is this going to be a *happy* year? Those who repent of their sins will be spared. "Except ye repent," etc. The penitent are safe, they need fear nothing. If we have no misfortune, then we have good fortune. And oh, what good fortune the Lord can give us in this new year! "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Ps. 84, 11. See Pss. 1 and 23. God's favor and grace in Christ. Rom. 8, 31—39.

b. Repenting of sin is always connected with true faith. Such faith lays hold of God's promises. Such faith is bound to make us happy, for it is victorious. 1 John 5, 4. The unbeliever, who refuses God's pardon and will not lay hold of, and rejoice in, God's gracious promises, curses himself. Luke 7, 30. We believers to-day rejoice in this infallible promise of our God: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." John 10, 27. 28. Hymn 375, 1, 2. 7.

Conclusion. — You have heard God's message, more certain of fulfilment than that this earth shall stand until to-morrow. God help us, every one, to say to-day: —

Let thoughtless thousands choose the road
That leads the soul away from God;
This happiness, dear Lord, be mine,
To live and die entirely Thine.

S.

Epiphany.

LUKE 4, 16—30.

Ever since Christ *appeared* to the Jewish shepherds and to the Gentile Wise Men of the East at Bethlehem, showing Himself to be the Savior of *all* men, He has in His Gospel *appeared* to many. But in spite of it many know Him not. Our text, speaking to us of Christ's *appearance* (Epiphany) early in His public ministry, in the synagog at Nazareth, tells us

WHY MANY DO NOT KNOW CHRIST AS THEIR SAVIOR.

1. *Not because Christ does not come to them; but*
2. *Because they IN UNBELIEF have rejected Him.*

1.

a. In the Old Testament it was said that the Messiah would come as *the* Prophet sent by God. Deut. 18, 15; Is. 61, 1—3.

a. Christ is the Messiah, the Anointed of the Lord. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me." V. 18. Christ was anointed with the Spirit without measure to be our Prophet, Priest, and King.

b. Christ, having been sent to redeem sinners, was to preach this Gospel, so that terrified sinners (the *poor*, the *broken-hearted*, the *captives*, the *blind*, the *bruised*) would be comforted with the assurance of *divine forgiveness*. He was to preach that the Lord was offering mercy and grace; He was to preach the "times of refreshing," Acts 3, 19, the *acceptable year of the Lord*, v. 19.

b. As promised in the Old Testament, so it was fulfilled in the New Testament: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." V. 21. Acts 3, 22; 7, 37.

a. In preaching the Gospel, Christ presented Himself as the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John 4, 25, 26.

b. This Gospel Christ preached to all: in the synagog, v. 16; John 6, 59; on the mount, Matt. 5, 1; on the seashore, Luke 5, 3; at a marriage-feast, John 2, 2, 11; to Nicodemus at night, John 3, 1sq.; to a Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well, John 4, 7sq.; in Pilate's

Hall of Judgment, John 18, 37; on the cross, John 19, 30. Christ said: "I spake openly to the world; . . . in secret have I said nothing." John 18, 20. At His command, Mark 16, 15, His Church has preached His Gospel to many millions. Luke 10, 16.

The Gospel is preached to many in our day, at home and abroad. We have been taught it, and it is being preached to *us*. Although in the Gospel Christ, the Savior, comes to men to save their souls, yet as to many it must be said: "There standeth One among you whom ye know not." John 1, 26.

2.

a. Men cannot prove that Jesus is not the Christ, and that His Word is not the truth. They must, moreover, marvel at His words and at His deeds. V. 22a; Matt. 7, 28, 29; John 7, 46; 3, 2; 12, 19; Matt. 8, 27; Luke 23, 47; Matt. 27, 54; 28, 9—15.

b. Many, however, *in the unbelief of their hearts* take offense at Christ.

a. "Is not this Joseph's son?" V. 22. *Unbelief* will not let many see "Christ's glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father." John 1, 14, 18. His very own rejected Him. V. 24; John 1, 11.

b. Because of men's *unbelief*, Jesus finally turns away from such unbelievers. When the Jews rejected Him, He turned to the Gentiles, even as in past times God's mercies were not confined to Israel, but were extended to a despised *Phenician* woman and to a *Syrian* leper. Vv. 25—29.

Even so *to-day* many take offense at Christ. They say, "Is not this Joseph's son?" They call Him a mere man; they deny His miracles; they will not be saved by His blood. They let their own *sinful human reason* prevent them from believing. John 3, 9. They listen to Satan and to man rather than to God. Gen. 3, 1sq.; 1 Tim. 4, 1sq. The Savior's complaint is still heard: "How often would I have gathered you, . . . *and ye would not!*" Matt. 23, 37. In the sectarian churches surrounding us there is a great falling away: spiritual indifferentism, doubt, *unbelief*.

Let us carefully examine ourselves and "take heed lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief." Heb. 3, 12. "Have not words spoken by our Savior sometimes seemed gracious to us until some little pride was touched, some demand made on faith against which reason or inclination rebelled, and, in our secret soul, Jesus was cast out?" Let us rather, when Christ's Gospel is preached to us, pray: —

Thy presence, gracious God, afford,
Prepare us to receive Thy Word;
Now let Thy voice engage our ear,
And faith be mixed with what we hear.

J. H. C. F.

First Sunday after Epiphany.

JOHN 6, 27—46.

Jesus provided for the temporal welfare of men. He fed the hungry, John 6, 1ff., healed the sick, protected His own in danger, John 6, 16ff., etc.

He would, however, not be considered a mere second Joseph, who fills the granaries of men with fruits of the field. Neither did He advocate socialistic and communistic doctrine, asserting that a well-filled dinner-pail is all that man needs for his happiness. A king such as some people desired, John 6, 15. 26, He refused to be.

The greater concern of Jesus was the spiritual well-being of men, and so He presented and offered Himself to them as the Bread of Life.

CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE.

Because He gives

1. *Spiritual,*
2. *Heavenly,*
3. *Everlasting life.*

1.

The Jews entertained very crude materialistic conceptions; labored for the meat which perisheth, v. 27; called for another sign, v. 30; spoke of the manna in the desert, v. 31; believed that they were expected to eat Jesus' flesh as they ate other meat, v. 52. Their request, v. 34, sounds good, but it only betrays their materialistic ambitions, such as the woman of Samaria had, John 4, 15. And they hoped to obtain the bread of which Jesus was speaking by their own works, v. 28. They believed not, v. 36.

Christ, the Bread of Life, is spiritual bread; not food for the body, but food for the soul. Our daily bread, according to the will of God, should sustain our natural life, but the Bread of Life is to engender and sustain and increase spiritual life. If this meat endures unto everlasting life, v. 27, it must needs also produce and preserve life. It gives life, v. 33, and fills living men with a life different from that which they number by years; a life which no man possesses by nature.

This Bread of Life is obtained in a manner different from daily bread. Spiritual life has its peculiar origin from seeing, and coming to, and believing, the Son, vv. 40. 35, who gives this life, v. 27. By faith Christ, the Bread of Life, becomes the life principle, the motive of our life. Because it is spiritual, it cannot be earned like daily bread, "work the works," v. 28. Because it has its source in Christ, man cannot possess it unless Christ gives it to him.

The spiritual nature of the life in Christ must be proclaimed loudly and forcibly in our materialistic age. The doctrine that works are necessary to obtain salvation can at no time produce spiritual life.

The Christ of the preacher who advocates social activities for the uplifting of mankind is not the Christ of the text. When socialistic writers, like C. Osborne Ward, contend that Jesus was a member and chief official of a labor union, and that His disciples were walking delegates and organizers, they betray their dense ignorance. No, Christ the Bread of Life, the Savior of mankind, imparts to man spiritual life.

2.

The Jews denied the divine and heavenly origin of Christ, vv. 41. 42, and so they did not expect heavenly life from Him, v. 34.

Jesus stresses His origin from God. Sealed by God, v. 27; solemnly attested and confirmed. Sent by God, v. 29. He calls God His Father, v. 32, in a most peculiar sense. Not only sent by God like the prophets, but from heaven, v. 33. Coequal with God because He is of God, v. 46.

Christ, the Bread of Life, imparts heavenly life to all such as believe in Him. He is the bread from heaven, different from the manna which Moses gave his people, v. 32. All who believe the Gospel have heavenly life within them. Possessing Christ by faith, their life must necessarily be heavenly life.

We must to-day confess the divine origin of Christ and the divine origin of His Gospel, Gal. 1, 11. 12, because the number of those is legion who deny His deity and the divine character of His Gospel. Christians should ever be conscious of this heavenly life in them and lead a life in conformity therewith.

3.

The Jews were wrapped up in this mundane life and did not look beyond it, and if Christ had sent them manna to be picked up in the streets, they would have believed Him to be a prophet like Moses. Not satisfied with the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, v. 30.

But Christ directs their thoughts beyond the sphere of this short life. He wishes to arouse a desire for the meat that endureth to everlasting life, v. 27. No hunger henceforth if man eats of the Bread of Life, v. 35. Life in death, v. 39. Everlasting life, v. 40.

The Jews did not believe in Christ because no tokens had been given the Son by the Father, vv. 37a. 39a. 44a. They were no sheep of His fold, John 10, 26. They were excluded from everlasting life because they failed to embrace Christ in faith.

But all such as cling to Him in faith have everlasting life, no matter who they may be, v. 37b. They will not be lost, v. 39; John 10, 27—29. They will all be taught of God, v. 45. O. C. A. B.

Second Sunday after Epiphany.

JOHN 6, 47—59.

“Jesus manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him.” The Gospel for this Sunday. The present Epiphany text brings another marvelous revelation of the glory of Christ in order that His disciples might believe in Him as

THE LIVING BREAD THAT IMPARTS ETERNAL LIFE.

1. *Why Jesus calls Himself “the Bread of Life,” the “Living Bread”;*
2. *How this “Bread” imparts eternal life.*

1.

a. The word “bread” was in the mind and on the lips of Christ’s hearers. The miraculous feeding of the five thousand, vv. 1—14. Now back at Capernaum, vv. 17. 24. 59. Jesus told His audience: vv. 26. 27. They had challenged Him, vv. 30. 31. To this He answers: vv. 32. 33. Thus He reveals Himself as the antitype of the manna, the Bread from heaven, v. 31, and speaks of Himself as the “Bread of Life,” the “Living Bread.”

b. Why is Jesus the “Bread of Life,” the “Living Bread”?
 a. Because life is the very essence of this bread. It is not a lifeless substance like manna and the ordinary bread, but “living bread,” which came down from heaven, vv. 50. 51. 58. Note v. 57: “As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father.” It is the “living Father,” the *Author and Dispenser of all life*. Christ is essentially one with the Father: “I live by the Father,” in possession of life coequally with the Father. John 10, 30; 11, 25; 14, 6: “I am the Life,” etc. Therefore “Bread of Life”, “Living Bread.” —

b. Because only this bread *procured* life for the world. V. 51: “The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” By His atoning, sacrificial death on the cross, Christ gave His body and His precious blood (v. 54) for the sake of, the good of, the life of, the world. Thus sin and death were abolished and life and immortality brought to light. 1 Pet. 3, 18; Eph. 2, 15; Col. 1, 22; Heb. 10, 20; 9, 22; 1 Pet. 1, 18; Rev. 5, 8. Testimony regarding the office of Christ.

2.

This bread from heaven the living Father sent with the mission and for the purpose, not only of procuring, but actually of *imparting life*. How is this done?

a. This masterful discourse of the Savior is an example of how the life that He provided for the world is offered and conveyed. He Himself, by His own Word, was emphatically and effectually offering life to His hearers. He is earnestly offering Himself as the Bread

of Life, that they might not die, but live. 1 John 1, 1: "The Word of life." The efficacy of the means of grace. By Word and Sacrament this life-giving and life-sustaining spiritual Food, Christ, is conveyed to the hearers.

b. This spiritual Bread is received by faith, v. 47; cf. v. 40. This faith is spoken of as a spiritual eating and drinking, by which the life conveyed is received, vv. 50. 51. 53. 54. 57. 58. Cf. Ps. 42, 1. 2; Is. 55, 1; John 7, 37. Luther, XI, 2253. *Form. of Concord*, VII, 61f., p. 995.

c. This spiritual eating by faith imparts life, eternal life, not because the flesh of Christ works as a "germ of resurrection" nor as a "tincture of immortality" in our bodies, but because by faith we appropriate the merit of Christ's active and passive obedience and are made partakers of His resurrection, v. 54. Luther, XIII, 2151f.

Furthermore, as natural food, by eating and drinking, is assimilated by the body, so, in a way, faith brings us into the most intimate union with Christ. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him," v. 56; and "so," since Christ is bound up with the "living Father," we by faith are bound up and united with Christ, "he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me," v. 57. *Unio mystica*. John 15, 4; 17, 23; 1 John 3, 24; 4, 16. Cf. Luther's masterful exposition, VII, 2359f.; XI, 2254f.

Conclusion. — Let us not skeptically reject this Bread, v. 52, for then we would perish most positively, v. 53; but rather come with thirsting, hungry, yearning souls and pray: v. 34.

H. W. BARTELS.

Third Sunday after Epiphany.

LUKE 4, 38—44.

Capernaum is full of sick. The spirit of an unclean devil, v. 33. In Simon's house his mother-in-law lay stricken with a violent "burning fever." In the evening "all the city was gathered together at the door." Mark 1, 33. They had brought to Jesus "all that were diseased and them that were possessed with devils." There they stood or lay. The street full of sick! There were "many." What a sad spectacle!

What a symbol of this world's misery! Capernaum, Galilee, Palestine — the world full of sick! It was so then; it is so to-day. You can get almost any one to listen to you if you speak of disease and its cure, for all fear sickness. Oh, that all would look to Him whom our text points out!

CHRIST THE DIVINE PHYSICIAN.

1. He makes a correct diagnosis. 2. He applies the proper remedy.
3. He effects a radical cure.

1.

A. *Diagnosis*. — a. He knows the nature of every infirmity. An experienced practitioner, as a rule, can detect the presence and determine the character of an infirmity by its symptoms. But Jesus knows absolutely the nature and the cause of every disease. He need ask no questions, He needs no information. Our text distinguishes between those who were ill and those who had evil spirits. Simon's mother-in-law lay sick of a "burning fever." Christ knew it. In the evening He cured "divers diseases," various kinds, acute and chronic. In each case He intuitively recognized its nature. Many had demons, were possessed; a devil had taken physical possession of their bodies, their consciousness, controlled them. (Describe this!) This would baffle medical skill to-day; but Christ knew what ailed them. He can diagnose every case at once.

b. He knows the underlying reason for illness. A human physician may finally arrive at the original cause, *e. g.*, inebriety, dissipation, exposure, etc., or he may discover that the predisposition is inherited from a parent or grandparent; but he can go no farther, nor does he care to do so. But Christ, the divine Physician, goes to the very root of all our troubles, and that is sin. He knows that this state of sin is universal, infects all men from birth. Original sin. Conversation with Nicodemus! This is the reason why He left that city to preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; in fact, this is the reason why He is in the world. Cf. Matt. 8, 17.

B. *Prognosis*. — A competent physician may at times foresee the *probable* course and termination of the disease and advise or warn the patient accordingly. Jesus infallibly knows the course and termination of all diseases. He knows the final result of sin unchecked. It is a "burning fever," which will torment man in the fires of hell. Sin — guilt — shame — trouble — sickness — death — damnation. Such is the dreadful state and fate of man if he is not rescued. That is the Physician whom we need, the infallible diagnostician, who understands our case. Entrust yourself to Him!

2.

A. *In general*. — Jesus healed those sick and possessed people by His Word. God usually works through means, the knowledge and skill of the doctor — the medicine he prescribes; treatment; operation. 2 Kings 20, 7; Is. 38, 21; 1 Tim. 5, 23; Col. 4, 14. Still, after all, it is the Word of God that contains the healing virtue. The drug cures only by virtue of God's almighty Word operating through it. And in truth no one is healed right until this Savior has healed him. A diseased soul, of course, can be cured only by the Word. Demons can be exorcised only by the Word. Inasmuch as Christ purposed to heal these people in body and soul, He applied the proper remedy,

the Word. He spoke; His almighty Word effected the cure. He Himself is the eternal, personal Word of God. He is the divine Physician. He approaches the sick-bed, bends over the patient, touches her hand, rebukes the fever. He draws near; He is the real Source of every cure for every disease of body and soul. He goes to that long row of sick-beds out there in the streets of Capernaum. The whole city looks on in awe and wonder. He lays His hands on all the sick. He applies Himself. This is the one truth He would impress on that whole city that night: "I am the Lord that healeth thee." See, I am the Christ, the Son of God, come to bear your sin and its results, to take away guilt and punishment. Oh, believe my Word! What I do I do only to confirm My Word. As I heal your bodies, so I heal your immortal souls; as I cast demons out of your mortal frames, so I destroy all the works of Satan, free you from his power. Believe My Word, and you will be well forever. I am the Life of the world, *the Lord that healeth thee*.

B. *In particular*: Christ must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, v. 43. What did He say? He said: "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

a. He preached the *Law*. Jesus taught the Law to prepare the people for His real mission: to each as the case required, to the publican, to the harlot, and to the Pharisee, Sadducee, and scribe. The Lord gave to each the true, authoritative spiritual meaning of the Decalog. — This we, too, must do, etc.

b. He preached the *Gospel*: to each, to Zacchaeus, to the Samaritan woman, to Nicodemus, etc. This He did that morning in the synagog; this He continued to do in the cities of Galilee. For this He had come. He preached it to each one who came to Him. But He also lived it, acted it, bodied it forth. What He did that day was then, still is, symbolic of His true character, of His divine mission. He is the divine Healer; He is the Light of the world. He is the Savior of each of us. He is the personal Word of God; in Him God dwelt and wrought personally. This is the true God and Health and Life. Surely this is Gospel. He must be blind indeed who does not see it. Yea, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." He bears all the woes and sorrows of mankind, sin, its guilt and results. — So let us preach the Gospel. Let us picture the divine Physician to each soul.

3.

a. Of the *body*. — Christ "rebuked the fever, and it left her." In an instant she was cured. She was well. There was no period of convalescence, no slow recovery. "Immediately she arose and ministered unto them." The cure was immediate, instantaneous, radical, perfect. She at once went about her household duties. And all those sick people in the city He healed. He spoke but the word, and they

were well. Such as lay got up and walked home. He rebuked the unclean spirits, and they obeyed. They were at His mercy. They knew Him, trembled in His presence, did not dare resist Him. He spoke to them, and they went away. They were absolutely in the power of the Holy One of God. He would not permit them to speak. He desired no testimony from them. Thus He effected a radical cure in each and every case. — Jesus still cures our diseases. It was His will to heal those people then and there because it was good for them in every way, and because their recovery served to win immortal souls and magnify His glory. He can and will heal our bodily ailments if we ask Him in faith, and if it tends to promote our eternal salvation. Otherwise we ourselves do not want it; and He, as a wise and benevolent Physician, will not grant it. What is a little pain if we finally recover, live eternally? What is temporal weakness, pain, or ailment compared with eternal damnation? Certainly, we "leave all things to His direction." Our spiritual welfare is of vital importance.

b. Of the *soul*. — Peter's mother-in-law arose from her sick-bed and ministered unto Jesus. She served the Lord. Who will doubt that her service was rendered in faith and gratitude? She had become a sincere believer; she was healed in soul. What a Sabbath-meal that must have been after that scene in the synagog and that miracle in the house! Peter was there; Matthew, the eye-witness, who records it, was there. In them the miraculous cures accomplished their purpose. Undoubtedly others in the city on that memorable night believed in Jesus as the Messiah and the divine Physician. And who will count the untold thousands that have read and pondered this text throughout the centuries? Surely it has been the bread of life to many.

Yes, Jesus is the *divine Healer*. This cure is recorded that we, too, might believe and rely on Jesus to heal all our diseases of body and soul. He proclaims it; His miracles attest it; the very devils are forced to confess it. If He has decreed that we are to bear a measure of disability in our body for our own good, let us submit to His gracious and wise will. We surely want Him to effect a radical cure, rid our whole being of sin and all its evil effects, heal us in body and soul, grant new, true, and perfect life, life everlasting. Amen.

J. G. SOHN.

Outline on Rom. 6, 10—12.

We are told that Jesus came into the world to give us life, and that we might have it more abundantly. John 10, 10. Without Christ men are spiritually dead. They know nothing of the life in Christ, they know nothing of this living experience of finding comfort in Christ, of quenching their thirst of soul when perplexed, when con-

science accuses, when fear of death assaults, when temptations attack them. They know nothing of feeding their souls upon Christ and His life. God wants to make men's lives rich and beautiful and spiritual and high, for by nature man lives a low, beastly life; all his thoughts center upon the body, and if he does think of things above the body, it is to think the most foolish, the most ridiculous, and the most superstitious thoughts. Being without life that is from God, without its spiritual content and blessing, such persons, if they wish to get the most out of life, will be continually seeking for greater self-indulgence here upon this earth, for greater liberty of action. But as time goes on, they are losing even the dregs, trash, and offal of earth. Indeed, they often note themselves that they are not living—they are dying. But whether they note it or not, life without Christ is spiritual death. Such know nothing of what David speaks in the 19th, 23d, or 103d Psalm, or of what Paul says in Rom. 8, 28—39, or of what Peter said, John 6, 68. 69. In order to have us all see that, the apostle in our text tells us of the life that is rich, useful, and blessed. He paints for us—

THE LIFE WORTH LIVING.

1. Its source;

2. Its fruit.

1.

a. Life, real life, must first be born and then nourished. It must have something to live upon. It cannot live upon exercise. Before it can exercise, it must have birth and food and nourishment. Upon what does the Christian live? Our text tells us: "Christ died unto sin once." Second Article. He made a perfect sacrifice for our sin. Thereby we are delivered from the guilt and punishment of sin, from death, and from all evil.

b. Faith in this work of Christ makes all promises of God yea and Amen. 2 Cor. 1, 20. What a life that is which appropriates all these promises! What a death to live without Christ and these promises!

2.

Such faith is to have fruit within us and in our lives. V. 12 the apostle tells us: "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

a. That does not mean that the concreated desires and needs and wants which dwell in our body, for food, drink, air, company, sights, sounds, etc., are in themselves evil, and that they ought to be annihilated. No, but their corruption and perversion, the sin that is in us and which would lead us to sinful things against God's holy Law, that is to be mortified. We are not to allow sin to rule our body, its functions, its members, its senses. Nor need we allow this sin to rule in us; for through Christ we are free from sin. We Christians have learned that sin is the greatest poison,

which disturbs and renders unhappy our whole life, and in Christ we are free from this tyranny. In Christ we have the strength, therefore, also to overcome, to overpower, to restrain, and to subdue this enemy, and to hold him captive and in subjection. We Christians are therefore to flee from all sin and from all pollution of the world and of the flesh, to resist the devil, and to crucify the old Adam.

b. If sin is taken hold of and resisted and mortified, then the powers which God has given us may exert themselves freely in God's service. Our minds may then delight in God's Word and its study. We may speak, teach, and sing of all God's wondrous works of grace and aid the Church according to our gifts and powers. We can then also serve our fellow-men in family, business, state, and as their friends. For: Gal. 5, 22. 23. S.

Literatur.

Amerikanischer Kalender für deutsche Lutheraner auf das Jahr 1924. —
Lutheran Annual 1924. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis,
 Mo. Preis: 3c 15 Cts.

Unsere Kalender sind wieder da. Nicht nur sind sie unentbehrlich wegen ihrer
 Listen, sondern ihr Geseftoff ist auch interessant und erbaulich. A.

Sketches from the History of the Church. By *G. E. Hageman*. Concordia
 Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Price, \$3.00.

This is a truly magnificent book. While it is not a formal text-book on church history, it brings before the reader quite many of the great events, movements, and personages that church history tells us about. Almost 100 pages treat of the history of Lutheranism in America. Those familiar with Dr. Krauss's *Lebensbilder* will see that the work under review presents, upon the whole, the same material as the German work mentioned, but they will notice, too, that we have here not a translation, strictly speaking, but rather a free reproduction in English of the splendid book written by the Senior Professor of Church History in the Seminary at St. Louis. The book is written in a lively, interesting style. The proper balance between recital of major facts and the interspersing of events of less importance is quite happily observed. In more than one instance information is given which is not easily accessible elsewhere. One of the interesting features of the work consists in its large number of illustrations. They are described as follows in the announcement of Concordia Publishing House: "There are about one-half a hundred, in part, quite rare woodcuts, about thirty plate engravings, and, in addition, seven double-page engravings and five reproductions in color, the latter perfect works of art." Regarding the external make-up the publishers say: "In size the book is 7¼ inches wide, 10¼ inches high, and 1⅓ inch thick. It contains 299 pages of printing besides the inserts. Though the type-work was set in Germany, it looks quite American and is, as far as our cursory examination has shown, quite free from typographical errors.

The book is bound in American taste, the material being a heavy, special cloth, grained in imitation of walrus leather." The price is \$3.00, and we agree with the publishers that, considering the material used and the typographical workmanship displayed, this is a very low price. We earnestly recommend the book to young and old who are not in possession of its German original. A.

Can a Christian Consistently Say: "So Mote It Be!"? By *Richard Kretzschmar*. Concordia Publishing House St. Louis, Mo. Price, 2 cts.

An excellent little tract. Its small size is one of the features that make for usefulness and effectiveness. Try it in your dealings with Masons. A.

The Bible-Story. By the *Rev. James Baikie*. Containing 50 full-page illustrations in color by *J. H. Hartley*. The Macmillan Company, New York, N. Y. Price, \$5.00.

The book embraces 472 pages. Its aim is to tell the Bible-story from the beginning of the world to the last event recorded in the New Testament in straightforward, simple language. The writer has succeeded in giving us a very readable book. I have found one instance where he went beyond his purpose of retelling the Biblical narrative, adding an interpretation of his own which is contrary to the conception of the inspired writer. The book is recommended to ministers and teachers who would like to see how a Bible-story can be told to their classes in simple and yet vivid fashion. A.

A Dictionary of Religion and Ethics. Edited by *Shailer Mathews* and *Gerald Birney Smith*. With the cooperation of a large number of specialists. The Macmillan Company, New York, N. Y. Reprint edition, \$3.00.

"This dictionary," as the announcement says, "sets forth in compact form the results of modern study in the psychology of religion, the history of religions, both primitive and developed, the present status of religious life in America, Europe, and the most important mission-fields, and the important phases of Christian belief and practise." The following facts might be stated here. 1. The articles are marvelously concise and informing. 2. Not every subject that a Lutheran theologian would like to see treated is given a special article. For instance, the names of Calov and Walther are looked for in vain at the respective places. Living persons are not included. 3. The psychology and history of religion are in the foreground. 4. The editors and most of the contributors belong to the liberal camp of theology. Two notable exceptions which I have happened upon are Dr. Warfield of Princeton, now deceased, and one of our brethren, Pastor Kuring, of Chicago. A.

New Testament Teaching in the Light of St. Paul's. By *A. H. McNeile*, D. D. (University of Dublin.) The Macmillan Company, New York, N. Y.

The title indicates to some extent the purpose of this book. The author endeavors to lead his readers to an understanding of the New Tes-

tament teaching by comparing one part with the other, namely, by comparing the teaching of the non-Pauline sections with that of the Pauline epistles. The doctrinal point of view is that of the modern theologian of the less radical type. The student who wishes to acquaint himself with the problems which the "advanced" theology of the day is grappling with will here find the information he is seeking. A.

The Macmillan Company, New York, N. Y., announces:—

1. **The Heroes of Israel's Golden Age.** By *George Dahl, Ph.D.*, Associate Professor of Old Testament Literature, Yale Divinity School. Price, \$2.00.

The great characters of Bible history from the time of Samuel to that of Isaiah are here portrayed. The author is a devotee of modern theology and does not seem to be at particular pains to hide his negative views. Nevertheless, his vivid narrative, the descriptions of localities in the Holy Land, and the historical details which he furnishes will be of service to the preacher who is preparing discourses on this period of Israel's history.

2. **A Manual of English Church Music.** Edited by *George Gardner* and *Sydney H. Nicholson*. Price, \$4.00.

The information given in this manual pertains mainly to the service of the Anglican and the Episcopal churches. A few chapters on the training of choirs may not make unprofitable reading for a Lutheran choir-master.

3. **Sunday-school Lessons for 1924.** By *James H. Snowden*. Third annual volume. Price, \$1.25.

The so-called International Sunday-school Lessons are discussed here. The author is master of a superb style, and the book makes fine reading. The arrangement of the material is helpful. The "practical expositions" offered are described as evangelical and unsectarian, and correctly so; for while the author seems to hold to the inerrancy of the Scriptures, the divinity of Christ, and the atonement, he does not insist on purity of doctrine in all particulars.

4. **The Making and Meaning of the New Testament.** By *James H. Snowden*. Price, \$2.50.

The book is intended to give a course, as it were, in the New Testament. The four great divisions are superscribed: 1. The Background of the New Testament; 2. The Books of the New Testament; 3. The Life of Christ; 4. The Spread of Christianity. The book is a scholarly production in popular language and will be found helpful by New Testament students. Its arrangement is such that it can serve well as a guide to one who wishes to bring before himself the contents of the New Testament. Dr. Snowden's theology is not Lutheran, but Reformed. A.

Light from Ancient Letters. By *Henry J. Meecham, B. A., M. A., B. D.* Macmillan Company, N. Y.

It is well known that the papyri finds of the last thirty years or so have ushered in a new era in New Testament study. A veritable stream of literature, evaluating the results of the discoveries, has begun to flow.

The present book is written by a pupil of one of the most brilliant men that gave special attention to the bearing of the papyri manuscripts on the New Testament, J. H. Moulton, whose *Prolegomena* to a Grammar of the New Testament are esteemed highly by all New Testament scholars. Mr. Meecham's book is not particularly pretentious or ambitious. It is of comparatively small compass (178 pages). It is not so fascinating as Deissmann's famous work, *Light from the Ancient East*, or Cobern's *New Archeological Discoveries*. The writer placed himself under restraint both as to style and material to be treated, and as a result he has given us an eminently useful book, especially for such as wish to be introduced, and introduced in all seriousness, to the study of the papyri in their relation to the New Testament and have not much leisure at their disposal. In terse language definite results are given, not in overwhelming number, but carefully selected. I should like to see the book in the hands of all my brethren in the ministry who have some knowledge of Greek. The work, alas! is marred by several concessions to the views of negative critics. One minor mistake which I noticed has reference to the location of Oxyrhynchus. On page 32 it is stated that Oxyrhynchus is about 120 miles from the banks of the Nile. This ought to read: about 120 miles from the city of Cairo. A.

Moses, the Lawgiver. 482 pages. Joseph, the Prime Minister. 241 pages. David, King of Israel. His Life and Its Lessons. 443 pages. Ruth, the Gleaner, and Esther the Queen. 269 pages. Elijah, the Prophet. 217 pages. Daniel, the Beloved. 245 pages. Peter, the Apostle. 371 pages. Paul, the Missionary. 570 pages. All by *Rev. William M. Taylor, D. D., LL. D.* George H. Doran Company, New York. Size of each, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$. Price, \$1.50 each. Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

These eight volumes are a republication of sermons delivered by Rev. Wm. M. Taylor, of New York City, in the early eighties of the last century. Each volume treats the life-story of a great Biblical character, each containing from 13 to 29 discourses. Homiletically, these are very simple sermons, almost invariably consisting, first, of an exposition of the text and then of application to the modern hearer. The language of these addresses is choice, yet simple. At the center of all of Taylor's teaching, also when he discusses characters of the Old Testament, stands Jesus Christ, the God-man, by whose vicarious suffering and death salvation has been brought to men. Erroneous views are at times expressed, but on the whole these sermons must be termed soundly evangelical. That they are now republished must be regarded as a symptom of a general demand for evangelical sermon literature and as such is a hopeful sign. It may be added that pastors have found these volumes helpful for Sunday evening discourses. G.

The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity. By *Peter G. Mode, A. M., Ph. D.* The Macmillan Co., New York, N. Y. Price, \$1.75.

The writer of this book is Associate Professor of Church History in the University of Chicago. His aim, as we can gather from the preface, is to take cognizance of the influence of the frontier in "giving to Ameri-

can Christianity its distinctive characteristics." The following table of contents will give the reader an idea of what the book offers: 1. The Americanizing of Christianity; 2. The Enlargement of the Missionary Horizon; 3. Revivalism; 4. The Small Colleges; 5. The Sanctuary of the Small Sects; 6. Church Cooperation and Rivalry; 7. Centralized Control in Church Government; 8. The Secularizing of the Religious Mind; 9. The Challenge of the Heroic. From the literary point of view the work is an excellent production. It certainly is ably written and very readable. Regarding its contents, one may say that much interesting material is offered here. As might be expected, Lutheranism is not given great prominence. The writer's point of view, which is that of modern theology, is in evidence quite frequently. The following remark regarding Lutheranism in the chapter on Revivalism, perhaps, is typical: "Lutheranism, early in its career, fell back into dogmatic inertia." Such of our pastors and teachers as specialize in church history may find the book not an unwelcome addition to their library. A.

The Minister and His Greek New Testament. By *A. T. Robertson, M. A., D. D., LL. D., Litt. D.* George H. Doran Company, New York, N. Y. 139 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$1.75.

A somewhat uneven book, yet a testimony to the author's accuracy of scholarship and soundness of judgment. He proves that strict grammatical construction, based on the most up-to-date knowledge of New Testament Greek, clearly supports the teachings of the Christian creeds. Remarkable examples are Robertson's proofs from the use of prepositions and articles for the doctrine of the atonement and the deity of Christ. It is a pity that the price could not be placed so low as to put this book within the reach of all students of the Greek Testament. A book of 139 pages, printed in large type, is dear at \$1.75. G.

Syllabus for New Testament Study. By *A. T. Robertson, M. A., D. D., LL. D., Litt. D.* George H. Doran Company, New York, N. Y. 274 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$2.00.

This is a bibliography or library guide to books on the New Testament and to the period of four hundred years preceding the birth of Christ. It is at the same time a class-text for lectures on inter-Biblical history and the New Testament writings. The lectures are far too sketchy to serve any purpose except in the author's own classroom. G.

The Book of the Lover and the Beloved. Translated from the *Catalon* of *Ramon Lull*, with an introductory essay by *E. A. Peers*. The Macmillan Company, New York, N. Y. Price, \$1.25.

This book has value for those only of our pastors who are making a special historical study of mysticism, and I hope that their number is small. Ramon Lull (1235 to 1315) was a Spanish missionary among the Mohammedans. He must have been a fascinating character, and the record of his life reads like a romance. The above book is one of the many works he wrote. A.

A Little Queen. A story for children. By *Margareta Lenk*. Translated by *Louis Lochner*. Johannes Herrmann, Zwickau, Germany. Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Price: Single copies, 30 cts.; dozen, \$3.00; 100, \$22.00.

If anybody wishes to convince himself of the abilities of *Margareta Lenk* as a writer of stories for children, let him peruse this little book. Even in a foreign dress, the English language, the stories do not lose their charm. Full of life and pathos, of interesting descriptions of scenes and events, of many wholesome lessons, and of the radiant sunshine of the Gospel of the Savior, the present story is one which I should like to recommend most cordially. The scene of the narrative is laid partly in India, and this will help to arouse and keep alive in those of our children who read the story an interest in foreign missions. A.

Ungemach's Responsive Service for Christmas. Arranged by *W. Wismar*. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Price, 12 cts.

Ungemach's well-known and much-admired responsive service is here offered with English words. A.

Our Mission at Ambur, North Arcot District, India.

It was in January, 1895, that Theodore Naether arrived in Krishnagiri, India, and began our India Missions. George Kellerbauer joined him shortly afterwards. Both men have already entered into the rest of the Lord. The pioneer of the Ambur station, Franz Mohn, is still among the living. Missionary F. Mohn left the Leipzig Mission together with Naether in 1893, but because of impaired health spent a little longer time in Germany, returning to India in the fall of 1895. After reconnoitering in both the Salem and North Arcot Districts, the choice of the conference fell on Ambur, which thus became the second station of our India Missions.

Ambur is a town of 20,000 inhabitants, divided about equally between Mohammedans and Hindus. It is situated just thirty miles west of Vellore, the chief city of the North Arcot District of the Madras Presidency, and lies on the great Madras-Bangalore-Calicut Trunk Road. Krishnagiri also lies on this road, forming the western terminus of our Northern Field.

Our work extends ten miles beyond Ambur, where the boundary was fixed with the neighboring North Arcot Mission. Vaniyambadi and Bargur are intermediate stations along this trunk road.

Ambur is also a railway station on the Madras and South Mahratta Railway.

Ambur is mentioned in Indian history as the scene of an important battle fought in 1789 between two Mohammedan princes, one backed by the French and the other by the British, the former of whom won.

The whole region from beyond Krishnagiri down to Ambur was known as Barra Mahal, the country of the twelve castles, the ruins of which can still be seen on some of the more prominent hills at Krishnagiri and other points.

The land which Mohn bought in 1896 on the aforementioned trunk road was military reserve ground. The plot across from Ambur I is still reserved for that purpose.

On May 27, 1897, the first mission bungalow was dedicated by the Northern Conference. Freche, formerly of the Leipzig Mission, who had lately joined us, preached on the epistle of the day. For a whole year Mohn had camped in the small Forest Rest House, in a still smaller railway waiting-room, and had also rented a house from a Eurasian lady near the station.

In India, where there are no hotels and restaurants of a sanitary nature outside of the large cities, one appreciates a *home*, be it ever so humble, such as our first bungalows actually were. The Board had instructed the missionaries to put up "Not-Bungalows," since they were not sure that the choice of the field would be permanent.

On his preaching tours Mohn made use of bullock-bandy and bicycle,—he was the first to ride a very primitive model of "bike" in Ambur,—and then began the first permanent work, the so-called compound school for outcaste children. In order to attract the ignorant Panchamas or Pariahs of the near-by *cheri* (village), slates, books, clothes, and sweets had to be given. The original walls of this first school-building are still standing on the compound, though the school itself has long been removed to the village. It is attended by 50 girls and boys, 10 per cent. of whom are Christian.

For three long, weary years Mohn went on sowing the good seed, and then he had the joy of reaping the first-fruits of Ambur, a young man who had passed through the compound school, called Devasa-chayam, "God's help," who was baptized in March, 1900. In the two following years a dozen or more souls were added, practically all the fruits of the school. Then a small chapel had to be erected, also a compound near the school, since no heathen would at that time think of selling ground for that purpose! The congregation worshiped in this chapel until 1915, when the space became too small, and services were henceforth conducted on the new veranda addition of the old mission bungalow. In 1917 the old chapel was torn down and a catechist's house erected on the same place. The congregation has been homeless ever since and is now using the boys' boarding-school for its house of worship until the new church will have been put up on ground which has been bought along the trunk road near the town.

So far work among the outcastes has been described. What about the caste-people, who form the bulk of India's population? To reach

these, preaching and tract distribution had been going on, and then a new opportunity presented itself: a higher elementary school in the caste section in Ambur was offered us and eventually taken over in a rented building. Also in the village of Periankuppam, some three miles south of Ambur, a primary school was opened among the caste weavers. For intensive work in the former institution, which became the secondary school, a second missionary was called in 1902, viz., Albert Huebener, now pastor in Kolberg, Germany. Huebener continued in Ambur during Mohn's furlough in 1904 and afterwards until 1907, when he went to Travancore and organized our work in Nagercoil. His place was then taken by F. Forster, under whom a 14-acre plot southeast of Ambur was bought for Ambur II, on which a fine, airy bungalow was erected. Meanwhile a small plot of ground was purchased on the post-office road for the higher elementary school in the town. From then on the missionary of the Ambur II compound devoted himself to this institution, while the man in charge of Ambur I did the congregational and village work. Forster left in 1911, never to return. It should also be mentioned that H. Nau, now professor at Luther College in New Orleans, was in Ambur in 1907 and assisted Forster in the school-work as long as the latter was engaged in building the new bungalow. No permanent successor was found for Ambur II until 1913, when Henry Stallmann took charge of it. During the two-year interim G. Kellerbauer and G. Kuechle looked after the school as best they could. Under Stallmann the boys' boarding-school was brought to Ambur from Vaniyambadi, and a systematic start was made with preparing some of the better gifted boys for mission-work. Stallmann's work was cut short by his repatriation to Germany in 1915, when Henry Hamann took charge of it. Under him the higher elementary school was recognized by the Government as an incomplete secondary school and is now permitted to teach up to Form V, one year less than a complete high school. In 1922 Hamann left for the United States on furlough, and L. Boriack, who had arrived only shortly before, moved into the bungalow at Ambur II and assumed temporary supervision of the higher elementary school. Our boys' boarding-school has also begun to bear fruit in the shape of several young men with a sound religious and secular education with normal course.

To return to Ambur I: In 1911, the same year Forster left Ambur, Mohn accompanied his sick child home to Germany. Returning late in the year, alone, he continued his work until the hot weather of 1913 set in, publishing during this time his Tamil Gospel-sermons at the request of the General Conference, which had met for the first time in 1912. The undersigned, returning from a health- and lecture-tour in Australia, took charge of Ambur I and extended the work mainly in a westerly direction, on the other side of the

Palar (Milk River), until to-day we are established there in 9 villages, of which the farthest is Pernambut, which is really a town, almost half the size of Ambur, and ought soon to become the headquarters of another missionary, since it is often very difficult to reach this extensive work from Ambur, the river being unbridged. The names of the other eight places are as follows: Perivareickam, Balur-Kothur, Yerigutti, Mailpatti, Chendattur, Valthanankuppam, Kirjmuringi. Missionary F. J. H. Blaess now has charge of this district.

The missionary of Ambur II also worked in some of the adjacent villages to the south, along the trunk road, establishing schools and congregations or rather branch congregations in Sanakuppam, Alanguppam, and Vinnemangalam. These three together, with Perivareickam on the other side of the river Palar, all being within a three-mile radius of Ambur, will for the time being belong to Ambur congregation, which now consists of 200 souls with 50 communicants. The congregation has elected five elders, three of whom reside in Ambur, the other two in the outlying villages. The church savings-bank account amounts to almost 1,000 rupees, which will be expended on the new church. Besides, the congregation contributes monthly 5 rupees to its teacher-catechist's pay, but we are still a long way from self-support. Much has to be done before the members will act according to the saying of the Lord: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." One of the main duties of elders is to see that the monthly contributions come in regularly. At a late meeting it was resolved to introduce a modified envelope system. Annual Harvest Thanksgiving festivals afford a fine opportunity of instilling the spirit of giving and of self-support.

One more item completes this brief record of Ambur I station. The Tabitha Girls' Boarding-school was opened in 1921 in what remained of the old compound school and is now on the point of entering a fine new building erected along Oriental lines on the rather small compound of Ambur I, which already contains two bungalows, the old "Not-Bungalow" of 1897, since then twice repaired, recently the residence of Dr. Doederlein, and the new two-story structure built under Kuechle in 1916. In 1921 fifteen souls were added to the congregation, and some are again under instruction for Baptism and Holy Communion.

Ambur III denotes the Medical Mission, which was begun in earnest in 1921. Its beginning really dates back to Miss Ellerman's first term (1913—1919), when she worked single-handed in Bargur without the aid of a doctor in a very primitive dispensary. In February, 1921, the General Conference assembled in Ambur, with the consent of the Board, decided to put up a small hospital with a dispensary on a beautiful, extensive plot, adjoining Ambur II,

which Brother Hamann had bought at a bargain price from a bankrupt Mohammedan. This fine plot, part of which is reserved for future buildings, is occupied by a substantial block of buildings begun in October, 1921, and is practically completed. There is a dispensary for men on the one side and for women on the other, with an office and compounder's room in between, then an "operating block" with subsidiary rooms in the rear, from which again male and female wards branch out on either side in the rear, corresponding to the dispensaries in the front. Farther in the rear are various outhouses for servants, kitchens, latrines, etc. So far only about \$10,000 has been spent, and there is plenty of space for additions, such as private wards, a European ward, a maternity ward, and the like. At the corner-stone laying in March, 1922, the hospital was named Bethesda. Although the buildings had been in use for more than half a year or more, the dedication did not take place until January 13, 1923.

The medical work was in the hands of Dr. Theodore Doederlein, who came to India in 1921. He was assisted by the Misses L. Ellerman, E. Herold, and A. Rehwinkel, our three registered nurses. Meanwhile Miss Herold has been transferred to Krishnagiri and has opened up a medical substation there. Dr. Doederlein sailed for the United States December 22, 1923, after a service of more than two years. A native Indian doctor has been engaged to fill the vacancy temporarily. The Misses Ellerman and Rehwinkel have charge of the work at the hospital. Miss Anna Georgi, who came here in the beginning of 1921, has charge of the zenana work. Pastor N. Samuel, who joined the mission in July, 1921, coming to us from the Swedish (Leipzig) Mission, was chaplain. When the South India Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized at Madras, he was transferred to that city. The management of the Medical Mission is in the hands of a medical board, to which all medical workers and two missionaries belong. The Medical Mission is very much in need of a bungalow for the nurses. The ladies are altogether inadequately housed. When funds become available, a residence must also be provided for a doctor.

This, then, is a brief account of the beginning and the development of the Lord's work in and around Ambur, within the comparatively small space of twenty-six years, from 1897 to 1923. To recapitulate: Ambur I does pastoral, evangelistic, and primary school work in the villages around Ambur and in the Ambur *cheri* = the outcaste village; another small outcaste village is situated on the plot which we have purchased for a church. Ambur II has charge of the secondary school and the boys' boarding-school, the former of which has over 400 pupils, the latter over 50 inmates. Ambur III is the Medical Mission.

Ambur, India.

GEO. KUECHLE.

Since receiving the foregoing article on our mission at Ambur, two changes have taken place in the *personnel* of that station: Missionary H. Hamann requested the board to grant him a release and has now accepted a call into the ministry, and Missionary Geo. Kuechle asked for an emergency furlough because of impaired health and is recuperating in Australia on his way to the United States. We ask the Lord to restore the brother to his former health.

FREDERICK BRAND.

Survey of Our Synodical Missionary Activity.

The missionary activity of our Synod is not carried on by societies, but by Synod itself. Neither do we go beyond the boundaries of our organization for funds, but limit ourselves to our own membership. At its triennial meeting, Synod looks into the needs of the various mission enterprises and after due deliberation appropriates the amounts necessary to finance them. Each activity has a budget and is expected to remain within its limits. Boards are elected and charged with the duty of supervising the work and administering the moneys. These boards meet at stated times, receive and discuss reports from the field, and make provisions for carrying on the enterprise. After three years of activity the boards are required to submit an exhaustive report to the Delegate Synod, which then gives new instructions to the boards and makes new appropriations. All these resolutions, however, are subject to the acceptance or rejection of the individual congregations. The action of Synod is merely advisory.

The money appropriated by Synod for mission purposes is reported to the District conventions and their officers, and these assume an amount commensurate with the financial ability of the members of the District. That amount is now passed on to the circuits and by them to the congregations. Upon mature deliberation each congregation voluntarily assumes a certain amount, pledging itself to contribute it, by the help of God, during the present fiscal year.

This method of raising the money needed for missions does not preclude private initiative and effort. Throughout the bounds of our Synod individual Christians, Christian day- and Sunday-schools, ladies' and men's societies, young people's organizations, such as the Walther League, and, in a few cases, individual congregations claim a special branch of the work, for the financing of which they hold themselves responsible. Of course, all these gifts are in addition to the regular contributions of each communicant member to the activi-

ties of his local congregation. Special donations for mission purposes reach the boards in the ordinary way, namely, through the District treasurer and the Treasurer of Synod. This makes for uniformity of administration and an intelligent mission policy.

HOME MISSIONS.

In our circles this term imports a very specific sense: it means mission-work carried on among descendants of European peoples by means of the English or the German language. When other languages than these are employed, we classify the mission as Foreign-tongue Missions.

From the earliest beginnings of our Synod, Home Mission work was considered one of our most important Christian duties. In fact, the organization of our Synod was motivated, in part, by this missionary need.

According to our synodical Constitution home missions are to be taken up and carried on first of all by the District synods. Accordingly, each one of our twenty-seven District synods devotes a great deal of time to this subject. Appropriations are made by each District to finance the missionary activity within its limits. The money appropriated is administered by a District Home Mission Board. Some of the Districts, however, have such a large field or are financially so weak that they are unable to provide sufficient means for the work. In a case of this kind they are subsidized by Synod. At stated times the boards of the Districts and of the General Body meet at a Mission Conference and discuss the needs of each District. By this method the appropriations of Synod are granted the Districts in an intelligent and altogether satisfactory way.

The latest report of Synod's Board of Home Missions, which for certain reasons could not be offered as an exhaustive statement, exhibits 1,073 stations, 77,876 souls, 39,077 communicant members, 3,881 pupils in Christian day-schools, and 15,872 pupils in Sunday-schools. One hundred and nine congregations became self-supporting in the course of the past year. In twenty synodical Districts 531 men were engaged in home mission labor. The budget of Synod for 1923 amounted to \$125,000. Of this sum \$107,232 was granted as subsidy to ten Districts for the first eleven months of the past year.

The Mission Conference requested a total appropriation of \$175,300 for 1924 for thirteen Districts, which was granted.

CHURCH EXTENSION.

An indispensable adjunct to successful missionary endeavor is a church extension fund. Missionaries must often begin work without a suitable hall or auditorium. Many cities and villages cannot be worked with any degree of satisfaction if there is no adequate

meeting-place. While some people will come to a private residence, many will come only for a short period of time, while others will be too timid to come at all. Frequently it is impossible to obtain a private dwelling for purposes of worship. Neither can public halls be had. And in many instances their reputation and their location is so unsavory that prudence demands that they be shunned. That missions and especially Christian day-schools cannot be conducted successfully under these circumstances is easily manifest.

Besides, it is frequently well-nigh impossible for a missionary to find a residence for himself and family. No one will make room for him in his own house, and there is no house for rent within fifty or one hundred miles. Missionaries have been forced to crowd their family into a church vestry or into an abandoned blacksmith shop or into some other tumble-down and health-wrecking structure. Evidently this does not serve to recommend the cause of the Lord nor to enhance the standing of the missionary in the community.

In the interest of Home Missions many of our Districts have founded a District Church Extension Fund and in some instances have gradually accumulated a very respectable amount. But, as in the case of Home Missions, certain Districts are unable to supply all needs and therefore cast about for help.

It is the province of the Church Extension Fund of Synod to come to the assistance of these Districts. The Church Extension Fund operates by advancing money without interest to needy congregations. Annually a certain percentage of the loan must be returned to the Fund, which again goes out in form of a loan to other stations. In this manner the money donated to the Fund is always active. The principal never diminishes.

The Fund now has a working capital of \$858,000. Since its founding it lent aid to 367 congregations to the total amount of \$1,025,000. No one will doubt the statement that the Fund ought to be much larger. The income was formerly derived from special gifts. The last Delegate Synod included this Fund in the budgeted treasuries and made an initial appropriation for 1924 of \$10,000.

HOME MISSIONS IN FOREIGN LANDS.

Already for many years Synod has been engaged in Home Missions in foreign lands. To-day our laborers are found in Canada, Germany, England, Denmark, France (Alsace), South America, Mexico, and the West Indies. Australia and New Zealand, which at one time received larger subsidies, are now self-supporting. Some money, however, still goes over there, just as the brethren in those countries participate in some of our work. To a few of the countries named we do not send missionaries direct, but help the brethren to finance their missions.

South America.

BRAZIL.

Our missions in Brazil, South America, have been conducted for twenty-three years. Argentina was occupied more recently. "Our fields of activity are the colonies of Germans who emigrated to South America during the past one hundred years, to which has been added quite recently the Lusitano-Brazilian Missions, which are carried on among the native Brazilians."

The work offers many peculiar difficulties, partly because of the spiritual degeneracy of the people, partly because of the great distances which must be traversed.

In Porto Alegre, Brazil, we have a small seminary, which had an enrolment of thirty-eight students during the past year. Thirty-nine pastors serve 122 stations, of which thirty are in full membership with our Brazil District. The Christian day-schools are attended by 1,650 pupils.

ARGENTINA.

Our missions in this great country are scattered over a very large territory and more recently have been extended from Buenos Aires in a westerly and northerly direction. Many Germans are said to have colonized the almost impenetrable forests. Our thirteen missionaries are making strenuous efforts to bring them the Gospel of Christ. At fifty-nine stations regular services are held for 4,769 souls.

PARAGUAY AND CHILE.

In Paraguay several small stations have been opened up. Chile has long been considered and in all probability will be explored as to missionary possibilities during the present year.

The churches in South America have begun to learn that it is one of the fruits of the Spirit that they make earnest efforts to become self-sustaining and to finance their own church-work. However, at present they still need our assistance. "The budget for 1924 calls for \$60,000. Transportation and purchases require about \$15,000 of the budgeted amount."

Canada.

Three Districts have been organized in this country: the Alberta and British Columbia, the Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and the Ontario District. The latter is by far the oldest of the three and was formerly known as the Canada District. Work is being carried on in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Quebec. Each of the Districts elects its own Home Mission Board, but works in close conjunction with the Home Mission Board of Synod. 274 stations have been opened in which the Gospel is preached regularly.

Europe.

The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Saxony and Other States has been in fraternal relation with us for many years. While numerically not very strong, it is active in the following states and cities: Baden, Bavaria, Bremen, Hamburg, Hessen, Prussia, Saxony, Thuringia, Wuertemburg, the Memel Territory, and London. Forty-eight pastors are in connection with this organization.

A small seminary was established last year in Berlin-Zehlendorf. Last summer we temporarily sent a member of our St. Louis Seminary faculty to Zehlendorf, who is to be temporary director of the seminary.

Before the late World War the Free Church in Saxony, etc., made a strong effort to finance its own church-work and was rapidly approaching its goal; our Synod, however, granted an annual subsidy. Since the financial collapse of the German Republic it has been possible for these churches to furnish only a relatively inconsiderable part of the money required for their work, and consequently our subsidies had to be increased appreciably. However, many opportunities for mission activity appear to have been granted them, and they are striving to garner the harvest.

France (Alsace).

Before the World War the mission in Alsace was connected with the Free Church in Saxony and Other States. Since Alsace and Lorraine are now under French sovereignty, our brethren in those provinces formed an organization of their own, which they have styled "The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Alsace-Lorraine." There are only three pastors in this synod at this time, a fourth one having been called to his eternal rest only a few weeks ago. An appropriation of \$30,000 was made for the work in Europe for 1924.

West Indies.

In the West Indies we have only two stations, one in Cuba, and the other on the Isle of Pines. Two men are engaged in this work.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The term "foreign missions" connotes missions conducted in pagan or non-Christian countries. So far we have laborers only in India and China.

India.

Since 1894 we have engaged in Foreign Missions in India. Prior to that time our offerings for Foreign Missions were sent to other Lutheran organizations.

In India we have two large fields, one immediately west of Madras, which has been misnamed the Northern Field. In this section we have three chief stations, with at least two new ones and, in addition, a Mohammedan mission in sight.

Our Bethesda Hospital and our high school are at Ambur, North Arcot District.

The other large field is some 600 miles southwest of the so-called Northern Field, in the native state Travancore. Here we have four chief stations and are planning to open up at least two more. To each of the chief stations a large number of outstations are attached. At Nagercoil, in Travancore, we have our small teacher-catechist training-school and a theological seminary. The enrolment is quite small. In addition to a large number of elementary schools we have three boys' and three girls' boarding-schools.

Not quite midway between the two fields, at Kodaikanal, high up on the mountains, our Missionary Rest Home (*Bergheim*) is located. Here we also conduct a school for the children of our missionaries, which is under the care of Teacher P. Bachmann.

In India we have some missionaries' residences (bungalows), schools, and chapels that serve their purpose well. New stations could not be opened up, and outstations could not be improved because we lacked the necessary funds.

The number of missionaries in India is: Religious missionaries, 20 men (19 married), 1 woman; educational missionaries, 1 man (married), 1 woman; medical missionaries, 3 women; total: 21 men (20 wives), 5 women.

In addition we have a total of 225 native pastors, catechists, and teachers, and we are working at 90 different stations.

China.

All our work in China was heretofore conducted in Hupeh Province, on or near the Yangtze River. The work was begun by a private missionary organization in 1913 and taken over by our Synod in 1917.

Until recently we had three chief stations with a number of sub-stations: Hankow, Ichang, Shihnanfu. We have now decided to open three new stations, one in Hupeh and the others in Szechuan Province. Szechuan Province is commonly reported to have a population of sixty million inhabitants, with no Lutherans of any kind doing mission-work there.

At Hankow we have a small middle school in addition to a number of primary schools and a theological seminary. At Shihnanfu we hope to open up a medical mission in the near future. Dr. Peter Kleid of Germany has accepted our call and expects to sail for the Orient this month.

For the past ten years all buildings used by us in China have been rented. This meant a total outlay of nearly \$50,000.

Our Missionary Retreat is at Kuling, some 150 miles east of Hankow. The Walther League assisted in erecting the present two Missionary Retreat buildings and is planning to finance our immediate China Missions building program.

The China missionary force consists of the following workers: Religious missionaries, 15 men (13 married); educational missionaries, 2 women; medical missionaries, 1 man (married), 1 woman; total, 16 men (14 wives), 3 women. Our native staff comprises fifty evangelists and teachers. Services are held regularly at thirteen stations.

The 1924 budget appropriations for Foreign Missions amounts to \$147,000 and includes part of the appropriation made by the last Delegate Synod for the Foreign Missions building fund.

DEAF-MUTE MISSIONS.

Our Deaf-mute Missions concern themselves with those unfortunates who can neither hear nor speak. The Institute for Deaf-mutes at Detroit was the forerunner of our present Deaf-mute Missions. It was and still is the private charitable enterprise of some of our churches in and near that city. Much gratifying fruit has resulted from its labors.

In 1896 Synod resolved to take up the work of Deaf-mute Missions. The board is charged with the duty of preparing men for this blessed work and of directing and supervising their efforts. The missionaries meet annually for the Ephphatha Conference, which is usually attended by the members of the Board. The work has been signally blessed. At present fifteen missionaries have charge of ninety stations, which are scattered from coast to coast, chiefly established in the large cities. Ten congregations have been organized. Our missionaries preach the Gospel of Christ in thirteen State institutions. The total of communicant members is 785. Some sixty-five deaf-mutes are being instructed for confirmation. During the past year the Gospel was proclaimed in the sign-language to nearly 3,000.

The budget for 1924 has been fixed at \$28,000.

FOREIGN-TONGUE MISSIONS.

Our Foreign-tongue Missions attempt to serve people who have left their native European country and come to the United States to make this country their future home. Many of them are professed Lutherans. However, due to the lack of spiritual ministrations they are confronted by the grave danger of straying or of falling a prey to sectarian influences, in both of which cases they forfeit their Lutheran birthright.

The object of our Foreign-tongue Missions is to provide these immigrants with the Word of God.

At present fifteen missionaries are working among Letts, Esthonnians, Lithuanians, Poles, Finns, Slovaks, and Italians in thirty-five congregations, located, with but few exceptions, in the Central and Eastern States.

Budget for 1924, \$15,000.

INDIAN MISSION.

Since 1898 we have been conducting mission-work among the Stockbridge Indians in Shawano Co., Wis. The chief station is Red Springs, where we have a church, a parsonage, a school, and a dormitory. The boarding-school has an enrolment of 123 pupils. Two teachers are employed. Practically all of the children are housed in the dormitory and are provided with the necessities of life during the eight months of their school-year. This appears to be the only successful method of getting the Indian children into our Christian school. Divine services are held regularly. The missionary imparts all the religious instruction. Two preaching-stations are supplied from Red Springs.

During the late fall of 1923 work was begun on the Oneida Reservation, in Outagamie and Brown Counties, Wis. A number of Indians who were confirmed at Red Springs live there. Some forty children from this field attend our school at Red Springs.

Two missionaries have charge of the work among the Indians. The budget for 1924 is fixed at \$15,000.

JEWISH MISSION.

The Gospel came to us from the Jews. Now, it is our Christian duty to bring the message of salvation to them. This is perhaps the most difficult and, as far as visible success is concerned, the most unfruitful mission activity in which we are engaged. With studied effort every possible obstacle is thrown into the path of the missionary. It is reported that Jewish antichristian propaganda has at its disposal a fund of several millions of dollars.

The mission is conducted in New York City, which has a larger Jewish population than any other single city on the globe. The rented building is hardly adequate for our purposes. Many Jews come to hear and take part in the services, which are held in Yiddish. Tracts and Testaments are in great demand. The mission appears to be entering upon a period of greater promise. One missionary is engaged in the work.

The budget for 1924 is fixed at \$6,000.

IMMIGRANT MISSION.

Our Immigrant Mission was founded to lend a helping hand physically and spiritually to European immigrants upon their arrival at the port of New York. Since then the work has been extended to other ports, such as Boston, Baltimore, Porto Alegre, Brazil, and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

As a result of the World War this form of mission-work is almost negligible, although a new influx of immigrants has begun to set in recently. The missionary and his board, however, were

heavily engaged in European relief during the past few years. And to all appearances they will be called upon to continue this labor of love for some time to come.

The Immigrant Mission conducts an office in New York through which passage may be engaged to and from all parts of the world and money transmitted to all countries. The missionary is ready to meet incoming and outgoing travelers and to assist them onward.

A Seamen's Mission is affiliated with the Immigrant Mission in New York City.

Three men are engaged in the two branches of this work. The budget for 1924 is fixed at \$7,000.

COLORED MISSIONS.

Director C. F. Drewes writes: "At its sixth convention, held in Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind., in the year 1877, the Ev. Luth. Synodical Conference of North America unanimously and enthusiastically resolved to begin mission-work among the heathen. In their enthusiasm the delegates did not overlook the heathen whom God had placed at their very doors during the days of slavery. There were hundreds of thousands of ex-slaves in the Southland who were neglected and forsaken in a religious way. And how about those who were connected with some sectarian church? The late Booker T. Washington gave it as his opinion that 'a large proportion of the church-members are just as ignorant of true Christianity as taught by Christ as any people in Africa or Japan and just as much in need of missionary effort as those in foreign lands.'

"The mission board which the Synodical Conference immediately elected consisted of three members: Rev. J. F. Buenger, Rev. C. F. W. Sapper, and Mr. J. Umbach. The first missionary chosen and sent out by this board was the Rev. John Frederic Doescher. On his tour of exploration, which took him to Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, Doescher established mission-stations in Little Rock and New Orleans ('Sailors' Home'). The first colored Lutheran Church which Missionary F. Berg organized in Little Rock in July, 1878, is still in existence. In the State of Louisiana there are now 8 organized congregations and two preaching-places, numbering 1,040 baptized members and 615 communicant members.

"In 1891 the Lord of the harvest led our Colored Missions to North Carolina. In the Old North State we now have 21 congregations with 1,165 baptized and 675 communicant members.

"The most remarkable growth has been experienced on the newest mission-field, the Black Belt of Alabama, to which we were called about eight years ago. Here 16 congregations and 2 preaching-places

have been established, and over a thousand souls have been gathered into the kingdom of Christ. The field is white already to harvest.

"Besides the States of Alabama, Louisiana, and North Carolina there are eight other States in which our missionaries are preaching the Gospel of Christ to the negroes: Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia. There is a station also in Washington, D. C. In this connection it may be mentioned that several pastors of our white congregations are doing mission-work among the negroes which is not under the supervision of the Board for Colored Missions.

"The total staff of workers is 86. Baptized members, 3,922. Communicant members, 2,202. Voting members, 507. The day-schools have an enrolment of 2,684 pupils. The Sunday-schools have an enrolment of 2,805." The budget appropriation of the Missouri Synod for the Colored Missions is \$110,000 for 1924.

Repeated reference has been made to the budget. In 1923 the budget for all our mission activities amounted to \$511,300. At this writing only one very small mission has been fully financed by the Districts of Synod for the year's work. All the other missions are in debt, some of them to an alarming degree. The December receipts will reduce the present deficits very appreciably. It is, however, too much to expect that they will wipe out the shortage entirely.

The Presidential College at a recent meeting resolved to request the Financial Treasurer of Synod to report the expected deficits to the officers of the several Districts of Synod for the purpose of having them added to the budget for 1924. The Financial Secretary has complied with this request.

The budget for 1924 for all the aforementioned missions of Synod shows a total appropriation of \$593,000. Adding the shortage for 1923, the sum total to be gathered for the missions of Synod will not fall far short of \$700,000.

The procedure of adding the deficits of 1923 to the budget of 1924 at this late date cannot fail to inconvenience some of our churches because the synodical and the home church budgets have already been computed and published. However, there would appear to be no escape from this dilemma, and we trust that all brethren will cheerfully superinduce the extra task upon themselves. The boards elected to transact Synod's mission business earnestly request the District officers as well as the pastors and congregations to come to their relief in the manner suggested. The burden of working with a deficit to which is added the deficit of last year is almost unbearable. We feel that Synod, for the sake of the great cause of our Savior, will rise to the occasion.

May God grant us a decided forward movement in all our mission endeavors in 1924!

FREDERICK BRAND.